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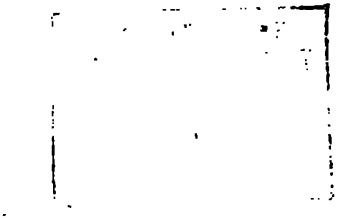

"I DREW HER TO ME AND KISSED HER."

(*See page 236*)

THE VOYAGE of the *ARROW*

To the China Seas. Its Adventures and Perils, including Its Capture by *Sea Vultures* from the Countess of Warwick, as set down by *William Gore*, Chief Mate.

By

T. Jenkins Hains

Author of "The Black Barque," "The Windjammers," etc.

With Six Illustrations by

H. C. Edwards

Boston: L. C. PAGE & COMPANY (Incorporated) *Mdccccvi*

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THE VOYAGE OF THE ARROW

CHAPTER I.

IN setting down this tale, I will say at the beginning that I am only a sailorman, and rough. Therefore, if I offend, I crave pardon, for my knowledge is only that of the sea, and my manners are ocean-bred. If any one is too delicately constituted to listen to a man like myself, and prefers a tale of gentleness and delicate desire, he had best pass over this narrative of part of my life, which has already received so much publicity. I know many people hold off from me. I know some sweet-scented sea lawyers who fancy they have a taste for description have called me many hard names, and that many honest folk hold away from me because of it. This and much more. But I have gone my way in

silence and lived according to the little voice within me, as a strong man should. And it is not weakness now that prompts me to speak. I feel it my duty, and will tell what I know and remember about the part of my life which the public have chosen to discuss so freely.

I do not know who will believe a sailor's tale, for sailors have been known to enlarge on their yarns, but my father was a sailor before me and was an honest man. So were many of the Gores, and I myself have been master of a deep-water clipper-ship.

In spite of this I hardly feel that I have reached an exalted pinnacle of human fame, for most people do not regard me as a success, nor am I held up as a shining example of what man might accomplish in his life's work, although I was captain of the *Southern Cross* — until I ran her ashore and lost her on the Irish coast.

This was all owing to misdirected effort — that is, her loss was; for, after slaving twelve years fore and aft to get command of a ship and at last getting one, I tried to break the record from Hongkong to Liverpool. I

did this by five days, and instead of holding offshore until the weather moderated, I overran my distance during a foggy, driving gale and left the whitening ribs of the *Southern Cross* to mark the success of my endeavour. Had I made harbour, my name would have gone down to posterity as that of the best sailor afloat, and I would have had the pick of the whole deep-water fleet, instead of being forced, as I was, to sign on as mate of the *Arrow*.

It made my eyes misty and something rose in my throat as I did this. I, a man of twenty-nine, signing the papers for a mate's berth just as I had done years ago when barely twenty.

I thought of the wild work I had done on the yard-arm in many a fierce and freezing gale. I fancied I saw again the ragged rocks of the Ramires through the gloom of the Antarctic night. The powerful typhoon of the South Pacific and the hurricane of the Gulf flitted for an instant before my misty vision. Then — Yes, then I was aware of Mr. Ropesend gazing down quietly at me

over the edge of his gold-rimmed spectacles, and I signed "William Gore" without a tremor.

Mr. Ropesend was the head of the firm of importers who had chartered the *Arrow* for this voyage, and he had appointed old man Crojack as skipper.

It seemed to me that the old merchant read some of the thoughts which were uppermost in my mind, for his eyes held such a pitying look that I arose from my chair with a rough oath. Then I threw the pen down on the table and bitterly cursed the man who had invented such a thing for a sailor. I felt like rushing from the office, and I set my teeth hard when I put on my hat and swaggered out into the street.

It was almost as hard for me to sign that agreement as it would have been for me to sign on a ship's articles as a common sailor. I fancied that some of the clerks smiled, but I really saw nothing distinctly until I breathed the damp air of the foggy street and mingled with the busy throng on the pavement.

Making my way slowly through the crowd, I entered the doorway of a saloon that stood on the corner of a cross-street a few blocks farther down-town. I had been in there often before, so, nodding to the proprietor at the bar, I walked into the room and sat down at a vacant table and ordered a drink. Then, picking up a copy of the *Marine Journal,* I tried to forget my misfortunes and become interested in the shipping news.

The noise of people talking as they sat and chattered at each other around the various tables distracted my attention from the paper. I looked over the top of the sheet to see if I knew any one in the crowd. While I looked the gathering over, lazily scanning the men's faces, two men entered from the bar, and I recognized them to be clerks in the shipping department of the office I had just left.

My first impulse was to leave the place, for I knew they recognized me, although they showed no knowledge of my presence. Then I realized that I was getting oversensitive and morbid about my downfall, so I buried myself in the paper again and ordered another drink.

I was very thirsty. The two clerks seated themselves at a table next to mine and gave their orders. In a few minutes I forgot their presence.

While I read of an overdue vessel which had just arrived with half her crew down with scurvy, I heard Mr. Ropesend's name mentioned in a low tone by one of the clerks. I didn't hear what was said in connection with his name, but, in spite of this, my curiosity was excited and I found myself listening attentively to the low, earnest voices of the men. This annoyed me extremely when I realized what I was doing, and I concentrated my thoughts upon the paper again. Picking out a most exciting incident, I read of how Amos White, a well-digger, had lit the fuses of three blasts in the bottom of an open caisson in the harbour. He had then started up the rope ladder, and it had parted and dropped him down upon them. With great presence of mind he had snuffed two of the fuses with his fingers, but the third had reached the tamping. Dropping flat on his breast, he instantly stuck his tongue into the hole and —

I felt a certain amount of relief when I found that Mr. White had saved himself from turning into an impromptu sky-pilot. Then my attention relaxed, and I was aware of the two clerks talking in an animated manner, with their voices still modulated, though louder than before.

"The evidence is dead against Brown," said one. "Anderson was pretty clear in his statement to Mr. Ropesend, and he is not the kind of man to incriminate any one unless he's pretty certain about it."

"That's all right! That's all right! I'll admit that," said the one with his back toward me, in an excited and silly manner. "Anderson is pretty careful about his own skin, and that's just what stumps me after all this talk about Brown and his sister. They are engaged, aren't they?"

"They are, and that's just what makes me so certain he is right about it. He never would have kept so quiet about it if his sister wasn't concerned. Brown will never know who gave him away."

"What did the books show, did you find out?"

"Several thousand, I believe, but of course Brown will get his friends to make it good, and get away. He's all right with Mr. Ropesend, somehow, and the old man, I hear, is going to send him off with Captain Crojack, so it can be hushed up."

"Well, I'm sorry for him, for one. He's a good fellow, and he's done more than one man a good turn through his influence. He never hesitates to help a friend, and that is more than can be said for Anderson. I never did like that fellow's face —"

Here I lost the drift of what was said. I had heard enough, however, to excite my curiosity again, and I sat wondering what had happened.

Young Mr. Brown had been cashier for the firm for several years. I had met him several times in the shipping-house, and we held a sort of speaking acquaintance. He had handed me my last freight money when I was master of the *Southern Cross*.

The man Anderson was bookkeeper for the

firm and a nephew of Mr. Tackles, the junior member. I had never spoken to him, but knew him well enough by sight.

There was evidently something wrong, so I thought, but as more could be learned by keeping quiet than in any other way, I didn't allow my curiosity to worry me.

In a few minutes the clerks left the room, and I finished the drink I had ordered. Then I paid my score from a bag of rather light pocket ballast, and strolled down to the dock where the *Arrow* lay.

Larry O'Toole, the big, red-headed, freckle-faced second mate, was hard at work on her main-deck getting a mixed cargo into her. He had been second mate with me once before, and he gave me a hearty greeting as I climbed aboard.

I reported to Captain Crojack, and then got into my working togs to start the men loading at the fore hatch. Every one aboard the ship knew me, and even the old rigger, who was setting up the backstays, had sailed with my father, Captain Gore, when he was the crack skipper of the Yankee deep-water

fleet, and who had gone on his long cruise when I was yet a boy.

I felt my position to be rather uncomfortable at first, but a sailor soon learns to adapt himself to all circumstances, and I reasoned that it would be better to appear as a good mate than as a poor skipper. Then I took hold in earnest, and it wasn't long before we had the clipper settling in a way that bid fair to have her on her load-line in a pair of days.

When we knocked off work for the night, I went aft and met Captain Crojack, who handed me a note from Mr. Ropesend. I opened it and found that it was an invitation to join a small party of the old merchant's friends at his house that evening. I showed it to Captain Crojack and explained that I was not a man for a social party of either men or women, and that in my present humour I would prove rather poor company.

After talking over the matter with him, however, he intimated so strongly that I must go that I finally went to a barber's and then rigged myself out as well as possible in a hired suit of clothes. I had lost all my shore togs,

except one ragged suit, in the wreck of the *Southern Cross*.

After finishing my rig, I made my way in no pleasant frame of mind to Mr. Ropesend's residence.

On arriving there I looked at my watch and found that it was exactly the hour he requested me to be there, so I walked boldly up the broad stone steps, rang the bell and entered. There was not a soul there besides Mr. Ropesend and his sister, Mrs. Matthews, but this lady was dressed as though she expected company. You will understand what I mean by that, for a sailor can hardly describe the gearings belonging to trim females, in spite of the fact that he is always talking about them and drawing comparisons between them and clippers under sky-sails.

The large hall of the house was decorated with great quantities of rubber-plants, palms, and ferns. The door which led into the passage to the conservatory was open, and the drawing-room was filled with the warm, damp odour of flowers and moist earth.

The old merchant came forward and

grasped me by the hand as if greeting his oldest friend. We talked pleasantly about old times for a few minutes, and then, excusing himself to his sister, he took my arm and led me into the conservatory, where he intimated that he had something new in the way of ferns to show me.

As we passed along through the aisles, among the plants, I recognized a rare Australian fern that I had presented him on my return from the first voyage I had made in one of his vessels.

It was pleasant to be among those luxurious surroundings, even for a short time, but as I knew that he had business with me which he was anxious to settle, my interest centred mostly upon the old gentleman himself.

After a desultory and one-sided conversation, in which I took the smaller part, he seated himself on a rustic bench and motioned me to sit beside him.

"I wished you to be here to-night," he began, "so you would meet Mr. Brown and, perhaps, have a talk with him, for he is going to sail with you on the *Arrow*."

I remained silent, for I couldn't quite catch the drift of his meaning.

"Not as a passenger," he went on, "but as third mate." Then he was silent for a moment as he saw I was listening.

"I see," I answered, but I really saw nothing except the old man's keen gray eyes regarding me curiously from over the rim of his eye-glasses. I am an old sea-dog of the tight-jawed breed, and I've always found that when a man wishes to learn something it is best to let the man imparting the knowledge do the talking.

"The young man has not been in good health for some time past and we have thought it advisable that he should take a long sea-voyage on which he can get plenty of exercise and fresh air. He has expressed a preference to go with you on the *Arrow*."

"I see," I answered again, for although not of a suspicious nature, I was beginning to see that there was something unhealthy about the business. I did not feel greatly flattered by the preference bestowed upon

me, so I kept quiet after admitting that I saw.

My manner was not lost upon Mr. Ropesend, for he eyed me keenly, and continued:

"Mr. Gore, this young man's father was my earliest friend. I looked upon him as I would look upon my own brother, and I look upon his child as I would look upon — well, say my own — had I ever married and had one — you understand?"

I bowed.

"And as he will have to be in your watch, I want you to take every care of him that you possibly can, without, of course, interfering with the ship's duties or discipline. He will not be one who will try to shirk hard work." He said this with great warmth, and after pausing a moment to allow his words to have their effect, continued:

"I know that your misfortunes have soured your temper to a certain extent — No, no, don't misunderstand me," he put in, hastily, as he saw my look. "I know that you are only human and what you have been through would have ruined most men. At the same

time you have a great deal to be thankful for."

"Yes," I growled, rather ill-naturedly, "I suppose I should be thankful that I haven't the smallpox, or the yellow fever, or a hundred other things. Being thankful for a number of things that don't happen to me does not make me thankful for some that have."

He was silent for a few moments, and then said, with a smile, "I see you wish me to believe you a philosopher. How old are you?"

"Twenty-nine," I answered.

"Have you ever been in love?" he continued, smiling broadly, and the merry twinkling of his eyes told me plainly that our business was finished.

"Never in my life," I answered, firmly, and I never knew until that moment that I could lie so easily.

"Of course, then, you have never married and don't know what it is to have a son of your own."

"Hm-m-m, well," I answered, "I've made several voyages to China and Japan, and it

is always the custom out there to purchase a wife, if you can support her and — "

"Never mind, never mind about that," he interrupted, quickly; "I don't want any of your reminiscences at present. You understand what I want done with Mr. Brown, so we might as well go in and see if any one has arrived."

I was astonished, when we neared the door of the drawing-room, to hear a great hum of voices. We had been in the conservatory only a short time, but during that interval a number of people had arrived and were seated at small tables playing euchre.

Mr. Ropesend found a place for me at a table with Mr. Brown, Miss Anderson, and Captain Crojack's pretty niece, Miss Waters. How the evening passed I can hardly remember. I was a poor partner for Miss Waters, who kept telling me over and over again that she and her mother were going out with us to China. It was a great relief to me when some one suggested dancing, so I could get away.

I felt conspicuous among those people, for,

after all, I was nothing but the mate of a deep-water ship. I could dance about as well as a Chinese mandarin, and my hands were so large and brown that they looked absurd among the rest of those at the card-table.

I looked around for Mr. Ropesend to say good night and see if he had any further orders for me. Not finding him, I separated from the rest and walked into the conservatory and sat down.

After a few minutes the good-natured person playing the piano grew tired and ceased. Then several couples came laughing into the conservatory and through it to the garden beyond. I thought I would wait until they all came out, and then go in and say good night, so I lounged back in my seat beneath the ferns and palms.

Presently Mr. Brown and Miss Anderson came out and stood just opposite me, but directly behind a thick bunch of palmettos. They were whispering earnestly, and the girl leaned heavily upon the young man's arm.

"How did it happen?" I heard her ask him, passionately.

"I don't know any more about it than you do, dearest," he answered. "I am the cashier, and I'll be held responsible. That is all, and that is why, I suppose, that I am going on this voyage. Mr. Ropesend seems to think it is absolutely necessary to hush the matter up."

"But I don't see —"

It seemed to me that I had made great progress in listening to matters that were none of my business. I reflected, however, that it was through no efforts of my own, and remained silent. I have always tried to be broad-minded, and this evening listening appeared to me to be anything but wrong. There was a short silence, and I caught a glimpse of the girl's beautiful face as she looked up at her lover's.

"Wherever I go, dear, I'll always —"

"And I'll be yours, Jack —"

And as she put up her beautiful mouth to be kissed, I gave a deep grunt of satisfaction before I realized what I was about. I turned away my head and heard a rustle of

silk. When I looked up again, they were gone.

As soon as possible I found Mr. Ropesend and said good night. Then, without a word to any one else, I hurried away.

The little scene I had just witnessed impressed me strangely and haunted me all the way down to the ship. That beautiful, earnest face, with the trembling, sensitive lips repeating those last words — somehow it brought back to me an incident that —

I passed a beggar leaning against the side of a house, with his crutch before him, and, as I passed him heedlessly, I heard the deep curses he hurled after me. Turning quickly, I grabbed him before he could move half a fathom.

"Curse, you scoundrel!" I bawled; "curse every one who is up while you are down. Curse again, damn you; it does me great good. Curse again!" And I took the last dollar I had left and forced it into his hand. Then I released him and he fell to the ground, and as I walked away I could hear the word "devil" hissed in a frightened whisper.

I made my way to my stateroom in the forward cabin without meeting any one except the man on watch. Then, quickly stowing my shore togs, I turned in and was instantly asleep.

CHAPTER II.

IT is pleasant for a sailor to get his whole night's sleep once in awhile, although, for myself, I always wake up whenever eight bells strike. This, of course, is from habit, and while I usually lie awake for some minutes afterward, it never can be said to break the night's rest.

Twice, as the bells struck during the night, I awoke, and the vision of a beautiful face with loving eyes passed before me. I lay awake both times for several minutes, and cursed my luck heartily because I was still a mate.

Then, before I realized it, I found myself much prejudiced against Mr. Brown. His pale face annoyed me whenever I thought of it, and once I half made up my mind to make him wish he had never set foot on a ship's deck, if he came into my watch.

When I turned out in the morning my temper had a less sinister aspect. I heard the black moke of a "doctor" singing in the galley, while the odour of steaming coffee filled the air —

"Oh, I'se an ole Cape Ho'ner,
An' I'se gwine round de co'ner,
An' I'se gwine whar de sun doan nebber shine."

I drew several long, deep breaths of the fresh morning air and walked out on the main deck.

"Foine marnin', Mr. Gore," said O'Toole, as he came down the starboard gangway, "an' if that bloody naygur'll devote th' energy he's wastin', t'gettin' out some belly ballast for us, we'll be for shorring up as far as the main hatch by dark."

A little hinting from Mr. O'Toole as to some sundry personal disadvantages to the doctor that might arise if breakfast didn't appear suddenly on the cabin table, had the effect of silencing the moke and producing the steward with the hand-bell.

Captain Crojack seated himself at the head of the table and cast a suspicious glance at

me over the rim of his cup, while he drank his coffee in silence. I said nothing about what I had overheard in the saloon the day before, and nothing about Mr. Ropesend's reasons for sending us an inexperienced officer. I tried to talk of the skipper's sister and niece, who were to be our passengers. Then the old man asked plainly if I knew that Mr. Brown was to sail as third mate, and I answered bluntly that I did.

It was so evident, from his tone, that he was trying to find out the reason why the young man should do this that I determined, out of pure combativeness, not to gratify his curiosity. I might also add that I could not have truthfully gratified it, even had I so wished, for all I had heard was but the gossip of clerks and Mr. Ropesend's transparent yarn about the young man's health.

When we were through breakfast, I went forward to relieve O'Toole. I found, then, that by keeping what I had heard to myself, my feelings were completely changed toward young Brown. I now felt as though I were his protector. This sudden turn of affairs

caused such a revulsion from the prejudice I had against him — when I thought of that sweet, upturned face — that if he had stepped on board that minute I would have given him a welcome that would probably have astonished him.

I merely mention these senseless facts to show how even the best of us — if I may be allowed to give myself my own rating — are affected by trifling matters without realizing it.

That night we found that, by a little pushing, we would be steved and ready to sail by the next afternoon or following morning. The skipper then made arrangements to have a crew ready.

Pretty Miss Waters and her mother came on board to see about getting their baggage stowed, and in the morning Mr. Brown came down and reported for duty.

I had so much to attend to during that last day that I hardly had a chance to speak to the young man, but I found that he was as willing to work as Mr. Ropesend had said.

By the time it was light enough to see,

in the morning, the shipping-master brought down the men. They were as scurvy a lot of sailors as were ever grouped on a deck. Norwegians, Swedes, Dagos, and Dutchmen of the lowest class, but there wasn't an English nor American sailor in the lot. I mention this to show what sailors are coming to, for it seems that no Yankee skipper will ship a Yankee crew.

Some of these men were pretty drunk and hardly fit for work, and the second mate carried aft a dozen bottles of hidden liquor which he found in their outfits.

Crojack came on deck and gave the order to cast off. The lines were let go and two tugs pulled us slowly into the stream while a few loungers and longshoremen, who were attracted by the bustle and noise at that early hour, waved their hats and cheered as the Stars and Stripes broke from the peak of the monkey-gaff.

The headline was passed along the port side and stopped at the mizzen channels in order to turn the ship's head outward, when she cleared the dock. One of the men, a dark-

faced Spaniard, who was so drunk that he could hardly understand an order, stood by to cast off the stop when the time came.

"Leggo!" bawled the skipper, from the poop, and the fellow started to cast off while standing outside the line which now had the full power of the tug on it.

In a moment away it went, catching him like a bowstring across the waist. He shot twenty feet into the air and, whirling over and over, landed with a splash in the river.

Crojack supposed that he would be dead or disabled when he rose, so he bawled for the tug to pick him up.

In a few seconds, however, up the fellow came and struck out lustily for the wharf, and, on reaching it, was hauled up by some of the longshoremen. He stopped a few moments to catch his breath, and waved his hand gracefully. Then, putting his thumb to his nose, he spread forth his fingers in a most aggravating manner at the skipper, who had the satisfaction of seeing him bolt through the crowd and make off with what little advance money he had left. This was

followed by a yell of derision from his sympathizing friends on the wharf.

"A divil av a trick t'play on an honest captain an' thrue Christian gentleman," muttered O'Toole, who had watched the affair with a broad smile on his face.

But Captain Crojack was not a true Christian gentleman. He was a plain honest sailor, so he bawled out a variety of adjectives, such as no gentleman would ever use, and called vainly for the crowd on the wharf to stop his man. Then coming to the sensible conclusion that it would be better to keep on than lose valuable time hunting the fellow, he signalled to the steamer to go ahead. I really believe he forgave the poor fellow in the bottom of his heart.

The old skipper was not much of a gentleman, because he was something of a Christian, and he was a poor Christian because he was something of a gentleman. A man will find it hard to be both; for a gentleman must lie and play the hypocrite often in order to be civil.

As I was saying, we towed down the beauti-

ful bay and through the great fleet of vessels lying at anchor. Through the Narrows and into the lower harbour, where we met the clipper *Washington* just coming into port. I recognized old Captain Foregaff as he sprang upon her poop-rail and waved his hand to us. Then Miss Waters felt in her pocket and produced a handkerchief and waved it frantically as the homeward bound ship drifted past with the tide.

Soon the low land of the Hook lay on our starboard beam and the swell of the Western Ocean was felt under the clipper's forefoot. The topsail yards were hoisted and the sails sheeted home and in a few minutes the bar was crossed.

A good breeze blew from the westward and, as the tug let go the tow-line, we backed the mainyards to put off the pilot. Then, clapping on every rag that would draw, we headed away on our course a little to the southward of east.

CHAPTER III.

THERE is an old saying, rhymed into an old saw, written by some one familiar with life at sea:

> "Six days shalt thou labour
> An' do all ye are able,
> The seventh thou shalt NOT rest
> But holystone the deck —
> An' scrape the cable."

It is comprehensive of a sailor's life, for there is little time for play for a man at sea. But sailors are not going to the dogs. The man who has made a voyage and listened to some old grumbling seaman who has seen his best days will doubtless come ashore and write how seamen are no longer what they used to be, but the man who knows the sea knows better. The seagoing portion of the human race has not retrograded any more than the land portion. There are stout men yet, as stout and strong as any that ever trod the

slanting deck of the old-time packet, and they are just as intelligent, and they are just as able.

The amusements of all men are naturally governed by their surroundings. The farmer or well-appointed stock-raiser will naturally take to developing such games as golf. It is fitted to his surroundings. The man confined to a ship's deck will develop a series of amusements which bear directly upon the peculiar affairs in his life and which appeal to him most strongly. Life at sea is more or less rough. The sailor has a rough comprehension of the humourous, and he will indulge in games such as "paying the footing" and "swinging the sluggard" with the zest that comes only to natures which have felt privation the victim might mitigate.

On American deep-water ships games of a romping nature are seldom indulged in to any extent, but there is no rule. A ship is like a face. It reflects usually the mind of its master. Some captains encourage games, but the danger of fighting among mixed races in the forecastle is too great to encourage

anything of a romping kind except under certain circumstances. If you ask an American sailor what he did on a deep-water voyage upon an American ship to amuse himself, he will look blankly at you and smile. After that it will be hard to engage him in conversation, for he will be convinced that he is talking to a mild sort of lunatic. Work and sleep — mostly the former — with a few moments to eat, are what he contents himself with, and if, by any chance, the officers let slip a little time and there is any vitality left in him, the chances are that the "holiday" will be spent in mending his much-needed clothes.

Upon men-of-war, where there is a town-full of landsmen and sailors crowded together, life is entirely different. There they will take every opportunity for a frolic and indulge in all the time-worn games peculiar to men-o'-wars' men. Nearly every one knows of the tropical games, such as receiving "Father Neptune on the Line," and the toll exacted from all who have never crossed before. This frolic is quite impressive upon a man-of-war when the men have taken the

trouble to dress for the occasion. The old bo's'n, with a voice like a bull whale in distress, will come over the bows some warm, quiet morning. His whiskers, a full fathom long, made of rope-yarn and dripping brine, will give him a most nautical appearance, and his crowd of retainers, in all sorts of grotesque rigs, will follow him. Shaving seems to be the most slighted part of the seaman's toilet at sea, and it will be necessary to shave all who have not been initiated. The razor usually consists of a barrel hoop a couple of feet long and of the usual keenness, and the lather a mixture which for peculiar and sticky ingredients is limited solely by the knowledge of the sea-barbers. The mop, or brush, generally gets into the customer's mouth the first time he opens it to answer a question roared at him in a tone which leaves no chance for silence, and, amid the yells of the sea-demons, he is tossed backward into a tub, or canvas basin, concealed behind him for the occasion.

But the larks of the "windjammer" of the merchant service have very little of the old-fashioned fun left in them. This is be-

cause the ships are manned by crews about one-quarter as large as formerly. Their fun is even more practical.

For instance, the fact that a sailor is lazy awakens a grim form of amusement among his fellows which often takes evidence in their jerking him bodily out of his bunk by the leg, and hoisting him high as the mainyard arm. "Swinging the sluggard" is a proper game, for it teaches him that he must turn to when the watch is called. He may not be much account as a man, but there are cold and tired men on deck who need all the help they can get. If he does not turn to and the mates are easy, some one will probably have to do his work for a few minutes. On American ships, however, when a man hangs back, the mate usually comes right into the forecastle to find out why. He sometimes gets a bad name in the newspapers for this, but it worries him not at all.

The old-fashioned way to amuse the rest of the watch is to rig a gantline and make it fast to the sluggard's leg as he lies in his bunk. Then the rest tail on to the line, and

up he goes, either through the scuttle above or through the door, either way leaving some cuticle behind, and accumulating a few black and blue spots in places, while the men whang him with ropes' ends. He will probably reach the mainyard feet foremost, and will be wide-awake when he descends. Once is enough for the average lazy and selfish sailor of the bunk-loving habit. The amusement it affords the watch can only be appreciated by one who has handled frozen lines in the early morning when it was clearly the other fellow's place to do so.

In some ships where the sailors' union is recognized, and the American element is predominant, the watch will sometimes start a dance, or march, to the exhilarating tune of the old "shanty:"

"The mate, he got drunk and went below—
He broke the long-necked bottle, oh—oh—oh—oh—
So early in the morning—so early in the morning,
The sailor loves his whiskey,—oh—oh, boy—oh."

Or they will swing into "Blow a Man Down," that song which may be shifted to any old tune to suit the occasion.

In the *Arrow* it was my duty, as mate, to see that things went well forward, and I went through the men's outfits pretty thoroughly. I always hated to find that a dago had a hidden knife of a dangerous length when I expected him to do some uncongenial work which might call for sudden suasion on an officer's part.

A big Swede met me at the forecastle door, and grinned at me as I entered. "I tank youse'll find us a good crew, Mr. Gore. Aye tank youse a good mate, sir," said he.

"You mustn't tank, Yohn," I answered. "I'll do the thinking for you. Let me take a look into your chest."

His face fell, but he knew better than to refuse, so I opened it for him and disclosed two bottles of liquor and a heavy pistol, of all of which I carefully relieved him. The rest of the dunnage proved almost barren of spoil, and after giving the room a careful survey, I went out again. The smell of the fresh, salt sea was now in my nostrils and the gloomy life of the shore left behind. Ahead was the excitement and hope of a prosperous

voyage in company of whom I began to suspect would prove pleasant passengers. The smells of the rigging, the tar, grease, and even the bilge as it was stirred up and came through the opening in the forward hatchway, recalled me to the life as of old, and the melancholy thoughts I had recently indulged in gave place to the most exhilarating ones.

"Sing, Dutchy," I cried to a squat sailor, who was hauling doggedly upon a royal brace.

"I don't got no tune, den, what?" said he, grinning.

"Aye tank I kin sing him," said a Norwegian sailor, tailing on the line just ahead of him.

"Turn him loose, then," I cried.

"Sing ye, Jezebel, sing," cried O'Toole, coming up panting with the exertion of trying to break a topsail brace. "Sing, an' stretch th' line," and he led off with "Whiskey Johnnie," into which the rest roared a chorus.

Four men grabbed the mainskysail halyard

and sent the light yard whisking up the masthead. The fellow who had loosed the sail had not left the yard and was sent aloft along with it, the men below trying to send him skyward with a rush.

Suddenly the halyard broke. The man on the yard gave a spring as it dropped under him. He shot outward, fell headlong downward, and just as we thought he would plunge headlong to the deck, a hundred feet below, he reached the backstay with one hand. With a power born of desperation, he grasped the line. His body swung around with the sweep of a whip-lash, but he hung on. Then his other hand reached the stay, and he slid quickly to the crosstrees. Down the ratlines he came on the run. Reaching the lanyard, he sprang upon the deck and dashed into the crowd of men who still stood gazing spellbound at his performance.

"Vat you do, hein? Vill you kill me, den?" he screamed, and he lashed out with a right good-will, knocking two of the men down.

I saw O'Toole grinning, and as I was the

mate, it was not my place to see too much. The big Irishman would take care of the fracas when the time came to interfere. I made my way around the deck-house out of sight, and sent a man after a new halyard.

The moke in the galley was hard at it in an argument with the steward. I saw and heard nothing. The work forward had been started, and all was well.

CHAPTER IV.

I WENT aft on the quarter-deck where Captain Crojack stood eying the towering cloud of snowy canvas, from the foot of the mainsail to the skysail yards.

"By gorry, Mr. Gore," said he, "we've got a good start, and if the wind holds we'll make a good offing during the night. I suppose you've met my passengers before?" and he motioned toward Miss Waters and her mother who stood near the companionway. They were apparently admiring everything about the ship except her sudden lurches, which caused them to make sundry clutches for support.

I bowed and spoke to them, but the young girl was so absorbed in the new scene before her that she said little except that it was "perfectly lovely," while the mother began to show signs of paleness coupled with a nervous catching of the breath at each roll of the ship.

"She's got a good lively feel to her, don't you think?" went on the skipper, referring to his vessel. "The only thing that worried me was the stowing of all that marble and stuff amidships, and so much iron in her ends."

As he spoke, the ship gave a jerk and tremble, throwing the sea from her weather-bow in a smother and going through it like a half-tide rock in a strong current.

There was no earthly use of disagreeing with him, so I said nothing, knowing full well he had overloaded his vessel by three or four hundred tons in order to make the extra freight money.

In a short time Mr. Brown came aft and, after greeting the passengers, told me that the second mate wished to see me, as he had mustered the crew on the deck in the waist.

I left the quarter with the skipper in charge, and went forward to where O'Toole had all hands lined up to divide into watches.

"Ha!" he cried, "Mr. Gore, but we've got some foine burds t' choose from this voy-

age. By th' sowl av St. Patrick, I niver seen sich a set o' mugs naythe before nor since. Which wan will ye choose for the first man? How would that mollyhawk-looking Scandinavian suit yer eye, ey?"

"None of your land-shark tricks on me. I know a man as well as you," I replied, sharply, but he caught the expression of my eye and he showed his teeth in a broad grin. He had a great, freckled, hairless face, this O'Toole.

So saying, I picked out a stout, heavy-shouldered young German, who was the most active and intelligent-looking man in the crowd.

O'Toole followed by picking out a powerful young Swede, and I then motioned for a dago to join me. We kept it up until I had eleven and he twelve men, for, as I had the third mate, it was better that the loss of our deserter should fall on my watch.

The carpenter, cook, and Chinese steward made up the rest of the ship's company.

After making a short address to the men and giving all hands a glass of grog, I dis-

missed them and told off my watch, the port, for the first after eight bells that evening.

O'Toole, however, called his men into the starboard gangway and addressed them according to his own ideas of what became a second officer.

"Now I jist want to hint to ye, so t' spake," he began, "that fer a set av windjammers, ye air a bloomin', ill-favoured lot o' sons o' Belial. But all ye've got t' do is t' jump whin I gives the whurd or I'll knock the divil and damnation thunder out o' ye quicker 'n old Nick can scorch a feather, d'ye see?

"I don't want no foolin' nor shirkin', an' mum's the whurd. Ef ye can't understand English, yer got yerselves into a mighty unhealthy ship, fer I only spake ter onct. Ef yer do yer duty, I'll be as tinder an' aisy with ye as yer swatehearts, but ef ye don't, by the howly, jumping Jezebel, I'll bear down on yer, an' thin stand from under."

Then, cursing them individually and collectively, he sent them forward and retired to his own room in the side of the forward cabin.

On going aft again I found the skipper explaining some nautical matters to Mr. Brown in such a contemptuous tone that it was evident the old man didn't believe in young men starting out as sailors with access to the quarter-deck.

However, the third mate kept his temper, and showed by his answers that he was by no means ignorant of the theoretical knowledge of navigation, whatever he might lack in a practical sense. He replied so intelligently to some of the skipper's questions that I almost believed that he had been to sea before, and I was quite pleased with him.

As I now had a chance to observe him closely in his sailor's togs, I could see that he was a well-made man and would prove useful with a little guidance from an older hand. His clear gray eyes looked straight into mine when I addressed him, and his small, though firm, chin gave him an air of honesty that was ill coupled with what I had overheard of him.

I had handled a great many men and had long ago come to the conclusion that I could

judge a man's capabilities as well as any one, so that neither denunciation nor praise of a person's character affected my judgment. Not that I am entirely impervious to prejudice, for, being nothing but a rough and not over-intelligent sailor, I can hardly claim such perfection. Still, I allow it to affect me as little as any human being can.

While we stood the first watch that evening, I had the opportunity to judge the sociable side of the young man's nature, for we talked nearly the whole four hours, while the ship ran along steadily to the eastward.

Neither Miss Waters nor her mother appeared on deck, and from certain sounds that issued from the cabin window, it appeared evident that they were not at present interested in nautical scenery. The skipper came up from below several times to see how we were heading and to look at the patent log, which trailed taut from the taffrail. He finally turned in, after muttering something about the glass having fallen a little.

"Isn't she loaded very deep, Mr. Gore?" asked Brown, when we were alone.

"Deep as a sand barge," I answered, "and she will be about as wet as one in a seaway."

"That's what I thought when they inspected her, but the surveyor said that as he was not going out in her, Captain Crojack would be the one to suffer. Somehow it seems to me that the fellows on the main-deck will be the ones who will suffer the most."

In this I quite agreed with him, and, having once established this confidence between us, we became friends henceforth. I have often thought since, after all we went through together, how much trifles affect the forming of friendships. Here the treating of an honest opinion with respect, instead of trying to appear blind to error, won the confidence of a man whose influence saved me from ruin.

As midnight drew near I sent him to call the second mate, and I stood near the mizzen waiting for the bells to strike.

Suddenly I heard a deep growling of oaths and sounds of a slight scuffle in the second officer's cabin. "Och! Ye spalpeen, I'll break every bone in your skin. What d'ye

mane by waking an honest man in th' middle av his watch below — ah, well, I beg yer pardon, Mr. Brown; but why didn't ye make yersilf known first? By th' sowl av th' saints, if that boot had struck ye betwixt wind an' wather ye would have become a cripple fer th' space av a year."

"Confound you for a red-headed fool!" returned Brown, angrily. "If you are going to kill a man every time he turns you out, I'll come next time with a handspike to — "

"What, ye mutinous young devil!" roared O'Toole; "what d'ye mane? Well, well, never moind; perhaps I was a little hasty. Ye see, I thought ye ware one av thim dagos, an' I niver allow ayther dago or Dutchman ter lay his hand on the Lord's anointed, which, if ye plaise, is no other than mesilf. Ye say eight bells have struck? All right. Ye can tell yer chum, Mr. Gore, that I'll relave him av his onerous duties in about three shakes av a sheet rope."

As he said this the door banged and Brown came on deck.

"That red-headed beast threw his boot at

me when I tried to wake him," he said, " and the next time I turn him out I'll be on the lookout for him."

I told him not to mind the second mate's peculiarities, as he was a good sailor, and that after he knew him he would probably like him better. That, in fact, very few people were charmed with O'Toole's manner, but most men got along with him well enough if they resisted his bullying ways.

The young man said nothing more, but I could see by the light in his eyes that, although he was a baby in size compared to the giant Irishman, he would try and give a good account of himself if they should ever quarrel.

In a few minutes the bells struck and O'Toole came on deck, while the starboard watch filed out into gangway.

" It's an apology I owe to Mr. Brown," said the big fellow, " for he's th' right sort av man, an' it would have been a pity had I broken his neck with that boot. Ye see, I'm of a very nervous temperament, an' like th' news av a thing broken gently. Me own

mother was av th' same nature, for whin th' owld man died, through th' interposition av Providence an' th' fore part av a steam-ingine, they had to appoint me brother Mike t' break th' news to her aisy like. So he sez, sez he, 'My dear, 'tis a short toime th' owld man will live now.'

"'An' why?' sez she; 'can't he drink more whiskey an' curse harder than any man in town?'

"'Cause he's dead,' said Mike, and th' owld woman always hild that th' aisy manner Mike had in breaking av th' news was th' only thing that previnted her from dyin' av th' shock."

I told him to be more careful in the future, and Brown, coming up at that moment in time to hear the second mate's remarks, laughed good-humouredly, so I felt that there would be no further ill-feeling between them.

I gave O'Toole the course to steer, if the wind held as it was, and then went below and turned in. The glass over my bunk had fallen four-tenths during the day and ap-

peared to be still going down rapidly. I watched it as I lay awake for a few moments and then suddenly dropped off into a sound sleep.

As the weather had been clear and wind light enough for skysails, I took no precautions to fix myself firmly in my bunk. I was, therefore, astonished to awake suddenly just in time to prevent myself from falling to the deck as the ship gave a sharp lurch and brought up with a jerk. Four bells struck, and I found I had only slept two hours, so, jamming myself in firmly with a blanket, I tried to sleep again.

I heard O'Toole's footsteps on the deck overhead, and now and then an oath when he halted at the break of the poop. The vessel seemed to be off her course, for she now took a heavy rolling sea on the port beam that sent her jerking and switching along in a most uncomfortable manner.

Soon I heard O'Toole's voice giving orders to take a pull in the foretopsail brace, followed by the tramp of men and clucking

rattle of blocks. Then came the order to take in the skysails, and, with the creaking of halyards and distant slatting of canvas, I again lost consciousness.

CHAPTER V.

BANG! Bang! Bang! went a heavy hand on my door, and a sailor poked his head inside a moment afterward with the news that it was eight bells, and that I must leave the warm blankets to turn out for my watch on deck.

I lay awake listening to the deepening hum of the wind in the rigging, and I knew that it was blowing a stiff breeze aloft. The air in my room was cold, and, as I heard O'Toole's footsteps overhead, the desire to keep within a warm, snug berth was almost overpowering. I could tell by the shuffling of the second mate's feet that he was having a cold time of it. However, I turned out and found Brown already on deck talking to O'Toole, who was evidently giving him some instructions he did not understand.

The ship was tearing along under t'gallant-

sails, heading a little to the southward of east, and braced sharp on her backstays to the northeast breeze that was increasing steadily.

The glass had gone down three-tenths since I had turned in, and Captain Crojack had come on deck to take a look at the weather. The odour of his toilet — which consisted invariably of three fingers of rum mixed with sugar and water — was perceptible in the crisp air, and he appeared a trifle nervous. As everything was all right, and it would not be daylight for nearly two hours, he finally came to the conclusion that everything would go along just as well if he went below and turned in again.

"Looks sort o' dirty away t' th' north'ard, Mr. Gore," said O'Toole, "but I've held her up to her course till th' last half-hour. I was just tellin' Mr. Brown here that he wants t' be careful about that weather maint'gallant leech-line, as it's badly chafed. We'll have a chance t' reeve another pretty soon."

I could see Brown's teeth in the darkness, for he knew no more of the whereabouts of that leech-line than he did of Captain Kidd's

treasure. He was sensible enough, however, not to show his ignorance to the second mate.

"I'll reeve the beast, if it don't take too much blood," he answered, and the second officer stood staring at him in amazement for the space of half a minute. Then he touched his head significantly with his carroty forefinger, and went below muttering something about men who were "off the handle" during the first part of their morning watches.

I came to the rescue as soon as we were alone and asked:

"Have you ever been to sea before — that is, on deep water?"

"No, never, except once when I was a small boy and went with my father. He was a master, you know, and had an interest in some of the finest vessels the firm ever chartered. But it won't take me long to get the hang of these ropes, for they are not so many as they appear to be after one gets used to them. If you'll give me a pointer now and then, I'll be able to do something."

I was sorely tempted to ask him why he

had taken the notion to come out on this voyage as third mate. Then, when I thought of what I had heard, it seemed too bad to stir up unpleasant memories with him, so I forbore.

He appeared so pleasant and willing that I made up my mind then and there to stand by him. It was hard enough for him to start out and make his living as a sailor, even if he might be able to hold a mate's berth in a few years, so I cheered him up and told him that he would get along all right. I had had hard knocks and a rough struggle all my life, and I have always believed that a man who has suffered hard knocks is less liable to pass them along to others than a narrow-minded, soft-handed fellow who doesn't know what the lives of some men are.

We didn't have much time for discussing nautical subjects on this morning, for, after we had been on deck five minutes, I saw that we were going to have trouble with the canvas, if the vessel wasn't shortened down quickly. I wasted but few moments before

giving the order to take in the fore and main t'gallantsails.

When the morning dawned, the deepening haze in the northeast turned a dull, steel blue, while the sun sent fan-shaped beams of light through it, giving it an unpleasant look to a nautical eye.

To windward the sea had a ghastly pale colour, and the whitening combers showed that it was beginning to get a good, quick run to it from the northeast.

Captain Crojack came on deck, accompanied by his niece. The young girl wore an old sou'wester, which had done duty for the skipper for many a year, and was wrapped in a shawl. She made a ludicrous picture, standing there at the companion hatch rigged out in those togs.

"Isn't this grand, Mr. Gore?" she cried, as I came aft to the skipper. "I do hope we will have a terrible storm. I do so want to see something exciting. It's awful to be stuck away down there in that stuffy old cabin."

"I certainly hope we will have nothing of the kind," I answered, rather shortly, for

the idea of any one wishing for a gale was exceedingly distasteful to me, especially in the hours of the morning watch when I was hungry and half-frozen.

She laughed pleasantly at my ill-humour, and begged Mr. Brown to take her forward, which the skipper, to my surprise, let him do.

"Going to have a fracas before night," said the old man; "you better see to those hatches, that they are lashed fast. She will be dry enough at both ends, but she'll be a brute for taking water over her amidships."

I went forward and had the carpenter get out two heavy timbers to lash over the after hatch, and then saw that the fore and main were battened properly.

The men eyed the third mate curiously while he helped Miss Waters on to the poop again and then joined in the work of lashing the timbers. I noticed a smile or two in the group and saw some of the fellows exchange glances.

The big, burly German — the first man I had chosen in my watch, and who looked

like an overgrown sculpin — made a remark to the man next to him, as they bent over the timber.

I brought the end of the lashing across the fellow's broad shoulders so heavily that he started up with an oath and faced around at me.

It was only for an instant, for I held my face close to his and he caught the look of my eye while I cursed him in a low, even tone for being so slow at his work. Then he bent to it again, flashing out venomous glances at me from the corners of his little black eyes.

Before going to breakfast, the skipper took in the maingallantsail, and we ragged along under topsails with the weather clew of the mainsail hauled up. Forward, the lower sails were the maintopmast-staysail, foresail, and forestaysail, and they strained away at a rate that sent the clipper flying through a perfect smother of white foam suds.

O'Toole came on deck, and Brown, the skipper, and myself went to breakfast.

Miss Waters came to the table, but her

mother was too ill to leave her bunk. The cleats were fastened to the board to keep the dishes from slipping to leeward, and the young girl appeared to enjoy this novelty. I couldn't help thinking how bright and rosy she looked as she steadied her plate and laughed gaily at every lurch of the racing ship.

She and Brown kept up a cheerful conversation, while the skipper and I drank our coffee in silence. Once I fancied the old men regarded his third mate a little sourly. However, he said nothing disagreeable and, after finishing his coffee, contented himself with some remarks about the weather. We were nearly through the meal when the vessel took a sudden heel to leeward.

A deep, booming roar overhead, mingled with the hoarse cries of the second mate and thundering crack of flying canvas, told us plainly that something was wrong on deck. Captain Crojack jumped from his chair, letting the dish of cold beef slide to the deck, and together we made our way on deck, closely followed by the third mate.

The ship, struck by a squall, was almost on her beam ends, while the main and mizzen topsails, which O'Toole had let go by the run, were thundering away at a rate that threatened to take the masts out of her.

"Hard up the wheel!" bawled Crojack, as he gained the poop. "Maintopmast-staysail, Mr. Gore, quick!" he yelled again as I cast off the halyards and got a couple of men at the down-haul.

O'Toole bawled for all hands, and, as I turned, he and a dozen men sprang into the main rigging and up they went to secure the maintopsail.

Young Brown kept with the men on deck and helped wherever he could lend a hand, for, as he was stout and active, his weight on a down-haul or clewline was equal to any.

The wind increased rapidly while the vessel was paying off before it, so by the time the main and mizzen upper topsails were snug, we were kept hard at it struggling with the main and fore sails.

As she came slowly to, the full force of the wind could be realized, and the flying

drift and spray gave the thing a nasty look to windward. The sea began to make rapidly.

I took my watch below a little before two bells, while the skipper stayed on deck with the second mate.

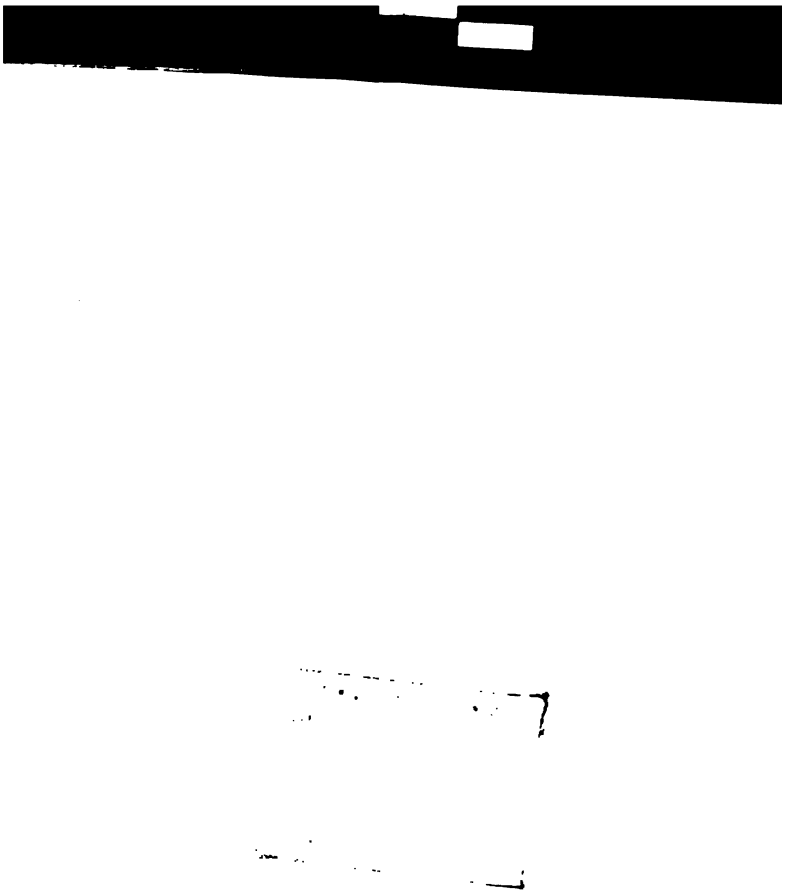
Miss Waters stood in the door of the after companionway holding to the combings of the hatch-slide. She looked a little frightened, but was apparently enjoying the ship's plunges in spite of it. By the present outlook of things to windward, it appeared as though her wish for excitement would be fulfilled before many hours passed.

Brown turned in, or rather he went below, when I did. I fancied that he did it for appearances, as there was little chance for a landsman to rest.

An old sailor will never miss his watch below in bad weather if he can help it, for he never is sure of how long it will be before all hands are turned out for a fight with canvas.

He will manage to get to sleep even if he is stood on his head every few minutes. But

"MISS WATERS STOOD IN THE DOOR OF THE AFTER COMPANIONWAY."



to a person unaccustomed to the motion of an overloaded ship, the jerking and crashing going on below are unbearable. It is entirely different from a comfortable 'tween decks of a passenger ship. Every plank and timber is groaning with the strain, and the tremendous cracking will make it appear, at first, as if the vessel is going to pieces in a few moments.

On the contrary, an old sailor knows that the more noise in the working timbers, up to a certain extent, the safer is the ship, for it is only sound timber that makes a great noise. As for me, I was asleep almost as soon as I had stretched out in my bunk, but almost instantly afterward I was awakened by a thundering shock that made the ship stagger. In a moment my door was burst open and a man stuck in his head and bawled, "All hands, sir!"

CHAPTER VI.

ON gaining the deck I found a huge sea had fallen into the waist, filling the main-deck knee-deep with water. The weather was looking wild enough to windward.

The ship was plunging into a mountainous sea, with nothing on her except the three narrow bands of lower topsails and forestaysail. She was heeling over to the gale until her lee deckstrake was level with the sea, while the deep roar of the wind, as it tore its way through the rigging, told plainly of the pressure on the canvas.

The flying, swirling drift struck the face so hard that it was impossible to look but for a moment to windward. I noticed Brown had turned out and was sheltering himself as best he might while he clung to the lee mizzen rigging. Captain Crojack was on deck, and O'Toole had gone forward to call

all hands. We had been hove to all the morning on the port track, but, as the barometer fell steadily, the skipper saw, as soon as the wind began to chop around to the eastward, that he was nearing the centre of the cyclone. All hands were then called to wear ship.

As the men took their places at the braces, the skipper gave the order to put the wheel hard up, when the forestaysail, which had held during all the morning, parted from the stay with a loud crack and was gone.

The heavy ship wore slowly under the three lower topsails, but finally came up on the starboard tack, heading almost due north.

When she first headed the sea, a big fellow caught her a little forward of the starboard beam and bore her down until her lee rail was well under water. Then, with a sudden lurch, she righted, sending the flood across the deck and filling the forward cabin and alleyways. The main-deck was full of water, and under the extra load the clipper settled almost to her deck amidships.

The ports in the bulwarks were nailed up

and the water would not get clear fast enough through the scuppers. The men were called aft on the poop, while O'Toole and myself, armed with handspikes, started to break out the bulwarks in the waist.

In a few moments we were joined by the third mate, who stood knee-deep in the foam and strove lustily to force the heavy planks from the vessel's timbers.

While we worked I felt the ship take a heave to windward, and at the same instant heard Crojack's voice bawling out something.

I turned my head just in time to see a blue hill of water rise high above the weather-rail.

Then, with a tremendous, smothering crash, it fell on deck and rolled over us.

I had just time to grasp the main brace when my feet were swept from under me and I felt myself beneath the surface.

Holding on with both hands, I tried to get my head out of the water, and in a moment the ship righted, jerking me back on to the main-deck.

As soon as I could see anything, I looked

for O'Toole and Brown. And then, yes, and then I must confess how weak a strong man is, I looked aft to see if a bright face was enjoying the excitement.

There, in the lee scuppers, lay the red-headed giant holding fast to the topsail brace with one hand while the other was fast in the collar of the third mate's jacket.

O'Toole was up to his armpits in the swirl, but his freckled face and red hair shone like a beacon in the surrounding waste of whiteness, while his deep voice, half-choked with salt water, spluttered out a string of oaths as he dragged Brown to his feet.

"Ef it's swimmin' ye're afther, 'twill be hard to keep up with us," he roared into the third mate's ear, "an' it's a divin'-bell ye'll be wantin' if yer goin' to help us here, so git on to th' poop before another sea washes ye clane out av yer skin." So saying, he released the young man and, grabbing his handspike that floated near, began to start the planking with powerful blows.

The third mate seemed reluctant to leave, but, as his handspike had gone overboard on

that sea, there was nothing else for him to do. He climbed on to the poop and held on to the lee rigging. In a few moments we stove out the ports, and the vessel began to relieve herself of the load on her main-deck. Then we climbed back on the poop and held on, watching the lower topsails as they tugged and strained at the clews.

Captain Crojack stood near the wheel, and his seamed and lined face wore an anxious look as he strove to pierce the cloud of flying drift and spray which bore down on the staggering ship.

I remember watching him and the pretty face in the companionway alternately. There was much of the sturdy sailor's nature expressed in the soft face of the young girl. And I have always found much to admire in strong, sturdy characters.

Even, as is often the case, if the strong personality has a coarse fibre, and lacks the soft and delicate traceries of sentiment of the weaker, I have always felt that more reliance could be placed in the former than in the latter, and under any circumstances.

Old Crojack's strong, lined face and puckered eyes, as he stood there trying to look to windward, was a study of resolute responsibility.

All of a sudden there was a loud crack, and the maintopsail seemed to melt away from the yard-arm as if it were a sheet of ice under a tropic sun. Then, almost instantly, the wind began to fall until in a few moments a candle would have burned on deck.

"Clew down the mizzentopsail," roared the skipper, as he sprang for the halyards, and in a moment the watch were all struggling with that bit of canvas and had it rolled snug on the yard in less time than it takes to tell it.

"Keep her northeast b' north," he sung out again, as the ship, becoming unmanageable, began switching and plunging into a high lumpy sea that seemed to come from all points of the compass at once. All around us hung low, thick banks of heavy, dark, and oily-looking clouds, their lower edges almost resting on the heaving ocean. The air had

become as warm as if we had suddenly entered the tropics. In the dull, uncertain light I thought I noticed something white on the water to the southward. Then, above the thundering of the seas that fell on the ship's deck, I could hear a deepening murmur. It swelled into a deep roaring as the hurricane, driving the tops of the seas before it until they were as level as a plain of driven snow, bore down on our starboard quarter.

With a rush that made every shroud and backstay sing to the strain, until the booming roar was deafening, it struck us and away we went before it.

The foretopsail held long enough to get the ship's head off before it; then it parted from the clews and jackstay and disappeared like a giant bird into the drift ahead.

It blew so hard that it almost lifted me from my feet as I crossed the deck.

Captain Crojack fastened the cabin door and pulled the slide to the companionway, for he knew that, running deep as we were, it would only be a few minutes before the sea would begin to board us.

"By th' sowl av Saint Patrick, we struck th' cintre av it this time, sure," said O'Toole, who, with Brown and a couple of hands in my watch, sheltered themselves behind the mizzen.

"It puts me in moind av th' time we had on th' *Eagle* frigate whin we struck into th' cintre av one o' thim circular storms ter th' north'ard av th' Bermudas. There was a parrot on board owned by an Irishman in my mess, and ivery time a sea would strike an' board us th' baste would laugh outrajis. Th' fellow was so scared av th' oncanny cratur that he thought it was Davy Jones himself. So he took him ter th' spar-deck in his cage an' opens th' door, an' says, 'Scat, ye baste!' an' th' burd was gone t' leeward like a streak av green lightnin'.

"'Now laugh, ye divil incarnate!' he yelled, 'an' thank yer stars me conscience previnted me from wringing yer bloody neck!'

"Do yer know, 'pon me whurd, for a fact, the wind fell so that by dark we were ready t' loose th' maint'gallantsail. The fellow

that owned th' burd was th' first on th' yard, an' th' first thing he saw there, lookin' down at him from th' r'yal truck, was a big pair o' green eyes. Th' next minute a wild, oncanny laugh broke out from th' heavens above to th' earth beneath.

"He gave one yell an' let go, an', if it hadn't been for th' belly av th' mainsail being tight as a board, he would have broke his neck. As it was, he slid right down on to th' main-deck an' landed on his feet, but he wouldn't go aloft again till they'd caught th' burd.

"Now, both ye, Mr. Brown and yersilf, are friendly with th' ladies, an' I'm thinking if ye could loose that cockatoo av th' older one's, there would be nothin' but good come from it. Hold hard!" and suiting the action to the yell, he sprang on to the saddle of the spanker boom. The rest of us grabbed whatever came within reach, for we saw a great hill of water high above the stern, and we knew its combing crest would go over us.

The men at the wheel jumped around for-

ward of it, as, with a thundering crash, the mass of green water rolled over the poop.

It tore the bitt-coverings to match-wood and crashed through the cabin door. A glimpse of struggling arms in the smother of foam that went over the port side told the fate of one of the quartermasters.

"All hands save ship!" roared old Crojack, as soon as the flood had passed over. "Good God! Mr. Gore, she won't stand another like that; she's half up in the wind now," and we sprang to the wheel to keep her from broaching to.

"Lay aft, bullies!" I bawled, and, followed by O'Toole, Brown, and a dozen sailors, I made my way as rapidly as possible to the lazarette to procure a tarpaulin.

We carried it into the mizzen rigging and, by dint of hard work, managed to lash it up and down the ratlines just as another sea boarded us and half-filled the cabin.

Shrieks issued from below, but there was no time to see what was the matter. Captain Crojack was almost drowned at the wheel, but he and the sailor left there held

on. The man was the heavy-set German whose shoulders had felt the weight of my rope's-end. When I saw how bravely the fellow held the racing ship up to her course, I was almost sorry that I had been so hasty.

As soon as we had the tarpaulin in the mizzen, and the bare yards braced for the starboard tack, the wheel was put down and the clipper rolled up in the trough of the sea. She managed to head up, however, although she took a comber into her waist that stove two men, who were at the braces, so heavily against the t'gallantrail, that one died by the time he was taken forward, and the other had two ribs broken and was crippled for weeks afterward.

Luckily the wind began to haul to the westward, and we found that on the starboard tack, with nothing but the tarpaulin in the mizzen, she would head up within four points of the sea, while the hauling wind drove the spray over her in clouds but two points forward of the weather beam.

Dripping wet and half-blinded with salt, I made my way aft to where the skipper

stood at the wheel. The cries continued to come up the smashed companionway, and, as I drew near, Crojack motioned for me to go below and see what was wrong.

I scrambled down into the cabin, and almost immediately found Mrs. Waters in my arms.

She was hysterical with fright, and begged me never to leave her.

She was a plump, good-looking woman, and I own that I felt a little flattered at this show of absolute confidence. I took her to the weather side of the cabin, clear of the water, and strove to quiet her, and in a short time she was silent. I then thought that it was about time that I should go on deck and attend to my duties.

As soon as I started to leave, she became nervous again and grasped me tightly.

"You'll never leave me here alone, Mr. Gore; you'll never leave me?" she cried.

"No," said I, mechanically, "I'll never leave you," and the words were no sooner out of my mouth than I was aware of a state-

room door being open and a half-smiling, half-frightened face regarding us intently.

"Mr. Gore!" bawled Captain Crojack down the companionway.

"Ay, ay, sir!" I answered, and, freeing myself, I made my way on deck.

The skipper eyed me curiously.

"Better see about getting a new main-topsail ready for bending, and get the fore-sail close reefed," he said, with some energy. And I immediately went forward.

During the dog-watch that evening we bent new fore and main lower topsails and were soon riding comfortably enough. After supper we kept away and drove off to the eastward, with the wind astern and enough canvas on the ship to keep her clear of the running hill behind us.

The carpenter was sent aft to mend the cabin door and clear away the wreck in the after cabin.

So much water had poured down the companionway that many movable things were washed clear into the forward cabin. Among these I noticed a book which I thought I

recognized, by its peculiar cover, as my private log-book. I remember wondering how it could have floated out of my room, but I picked it up and laid it carefully in my bunk to dry.

When I took my watch below, I opened it to see if it was damaged by the water, and was astonished to find neat entries made in it by an unmistakably feminine hand.

On the first page were a few terse lines, thus: "April 16th, left New York. Am a little seasick. Am much amused at the antics of the ogling first officer. His name is Gore, an abbreviation of gorilla. He certainly looks like one," etc.

I was a little cut at this. I am not handsome, and that made it hurt all the more.

I closed the book and looked out my door into the forward cabin. It was empty. Noiselessly I stole to the door in the bulkhead and looked into the after cabin. It was empty also, and from the sounds that came from the skipper's room it appeared that he and the passengers were absorbed in conversation over our recent danger. Here was my

chance. I went softly to Mrs. Waters's door and turned the latch. It opened and I saw that all was dark within, so I quickly deposited the book into what I supposed was the empty bunk and turned to flee. Instantly I felt my hair seized from behind and a piercing shriek rent the air close to my ear. I struggled frantically to escape, and had just gained the centre of the cabin when Crojack's door flew open and he and his niece rushed out into the room.

The two staterooms were directly opposite and opened into the main cabin, so it was evident that he had heard the shriek and had sprung to the rescue.

He was upon me in an instant, and I believe would certainly have killed me before I could have said a word of explanation, had it been in his power to do so.

As it was, I gripped him around the body, holding his arms to his sides and strove to explain matters.

Mrs. Waters tugged lustily at my hair and screamed at the top of her voice, while her daughter looked on in consternation.

In a few moments the good lady let go my hair and very properly fainted. Then I soon had Crojack listening to reason.

When matters were straightened out a little, I went back to my bunk and lay there all the rest of my watch below, cursing my ill luck.

I said, in the beginning, that I was broad-minded, and I've always believed that, if there is an all-good and all-powerful Creator, there can be no wrong deduced from any action. He could and would prevent it.

Therefore, from this logical standpoint, there can be no wrong, for every one must believe in an all-good and all-powerful Creator.

From a social or religious standpoint the matter is quite different. A person can do much wrong from this standpoint.

This is not entirely a new line of reasoning, perhaps, but I've since come to the conclusion that it might have appeared so to Crojack and his niece at that time. Both of those looked upon that absurd affair from an illogical standpoint. Which goes to show

how much wrong can be done a man by being more religious than logical. Why do good women always suspect wrong of good men? Bah!

CHAPTER VII.

IN the morning, after standing our regular watches, all hands felt better.

I had been wondering how I could treat the affair of the log-book, and how I could get courage to face the passengers at the breakfast-table.

I was quite angry at the treatment I had received, but, on thinking the matter over during the night, I concluded to put on a bold front and act as though nothing had happened to strain my feelings.

Ill luck, I reasoned, could not make a man mean unless the man already had the instincts of a mean person to start with. It would only make him a little more careful and more stern of purpose.

I knew that a man with ill luck always appears mean to women, because women can seldom realize anything but success as a com-

bination of all the virtues in man. It is probably best for them that this is so, for it dissolves a great many combinations between men and women which might result in great discomfort to both. Therefore, I determined to dismiss the matter from my mind.

We had lost two men during the gale, and there was work to be done on our spars and rigging that would keep all hands busy for several days.

In spite of the feeling of relief which was expressed on the faces of all the men, there was a silence among them that told plainly how the loss of a shipmate will affect even the roughest sailor at first.

The dead man in the fo'c'sle was a ghastly sight, and the wounded one groaned loudly at times, so it was little wonder that the men of the starboard watch refused to heave down with a chorus when they trimmed the braces.

O'Toole cursed them roundly for a half-hearted set of loafers. He always cursed men from habit, and never struck them when his ideas and theirs were found to be differ-

ent. As the morning wore on, the sun shone at brief intervals through the gaps between the flying gulf clouds, and its warmth began to dry out our wet clothes and make things more cheerful.

Miss Waters joined us at breakfast, and appeared none the worse for the shaking up she had been through.

She was dressed in a neat-fitting cloth jacket that showed off her beautiful figure to great advantage, and she chatted and laughed in gentle good humour.

I have been in almost all countries and have seen nearly all kinds of women, but it seemed to me at that time that I had never seen one so beautiful in face and figure, and so gentle in disposition.

The girl, however, always appeared more interested in the third mate than in anything else.

Of course, I didn't resent this, but it somehow made me feel conscious of my rough appearance, and convinced me that my sailor manners were out of place at the cabin table while she sat there. Her deep blue eyes had

a roguish look in them as she glanced across at me this morning.

I saw that she intended to say something to me, and I felt my cheeks burn at the fear of some allusion to the unfortunate incident of the evening before.

"Well, Mr. Gore," she broke forth, "I suppose you are not going to forgive me for wishing for that storm? You can't be so superstitious as to believe that my wishing had anything to do with the state of the weather. You need never fear that I'll wish for another, though, for I never was so frightened before in all my life."

"I suppose you know that we lost two men and that another was badly injured?" I answered, quickly, and then immediately felt what a fool I was to throw such a shadow over the young girl's spirits.

"Why, no, indeed, I knew nothing of the kind," she answered, and her laugh was gone, and her face grew pale.

"Where is the injured man?"

"In the fo'castle," I answered, and, as I did so, the skipper gave me a warning frown.

"Uncle David, I want you to let me go with Mr. Gore to see the poor man," she said, quietly. "I had no idea anything so dreadful happened."

The old skipper scowled at me and grunted out some reply, and I could see that he was anything but pleased at my reference to the accident.

However, I had no sooner gone on deck, after breakfast, than Miss Waters came to me and asked me to take her forward. The ship was running along easily under t'gallantsails, and the main-deck was safe enough, so, offering my arm for support, we started.

I noticed Brown hurrying along the port gangway and saw him enter the fo'castle. Then, when we arrived, he came out and answered my look by telling Miss Waters that she might enter.

It was no imagination on my part when I noticed the young girl shrink at the sight of dirty, wet clothes and the none too clean floor as we entered.

She still held to my arm, and we walked up to the form of a man lying in one of

the bunks. The third mate sprang quickly in front of us and pointed to a bunk farther forward, just as I was about to address a corpse.

The girl saw my quick movement as I turned my gaze in the right direction, and, although only the back of the dead man's head was visible, she guessed the mistake I had made, for she trembled violently.

She went up to the wounded sailor, who stared at her in stupid wonder. Then she asked him how he felt, and put her soft little hand on his face and tried to cheer him up.

The poor fellow appeared almost frightened at this, and muttered some nonsense about an angel. But he was a foul-looking dago of the lowest class, and the girl could not understand him.

Finally, after promising to make him some gruel, she went on deck again, much to my relief. I could not help admiring the feeling of sympathy she showed for the man, but I felt that the fo'castle of a ship was not the place for a girl to enter, even attended as she was.

When we went on deck, she drew a long breath and appeared thoughtful for some moments. Finally she said:

"Are all forecastles on ships like that?"

"Yes," I answered, "only most of them are a good deal dirtier and worse ventilated. When I first went to sea, the fo'castle was always below, 'tween decks, and not a big, airy room, with windows in it, like the one we've just left. I remember, on the old clipper *Mohawk*, we would have thought a fo'castle like this one equal to the captain's cabin."

She was silent while we walked aft, and I supposed she was thinking of the sailor forward. Just as we gained the poop she turned her head and looked up at me, saying:

"And you were a sailor once and had to live in a place like that?"

"I am a sailor yet, I believe, and I will probably never be anything else, except a fool, also," I answered; "but as for living in places like our fo'castle, I must confess that I've spent at least ten years in them."

She let go my arm and, I fancied, gave a hopeless little sigh.

"I think I'd rather be a cow and live in a comfortable barn," she remarked, rather drily.

"No objection on my part," I answered, quickly.

Then she thanked me for going with her, and joined the skipper, who had been standing near the quarter-rail watching us intently. He saw her safely aft to the companionway and then returned to where I stood. He was silent for some time and then looked at me and smiled. I have always believed the old skipper was something of a mind-reader.

"Women are queer things," he said.

I said nothing, but looked an affirmative answer.

"But with man," he went on, "more is to be hoped from. He should not let his thoughts dwell too much on the necessity of his getting married and propagating his species. It is natural for a woman to wish to get married for many reasons; but a man

should not let this be the principal object in his life. That this is, unfortunately, not always the case is proved by his thoughts and actions.

"When you get to be an old shellback, like me, you will see that, while love of women is good enough to a certain extent, there are other duties for an honest man to perform before his cruise is out.

"Now, take yourself, for instance. You never made a fool of yourself about women. And that's the reason you had the *Southern Cross* — before you lost her. Whereas, if you were like O'Toole, who is always reading story-books, where would you be to-day? Story-books and women have kept him down, and one is about the same thing as the other. I've had hundreds of story-books sent aboard here by those women folks at the sailors' mission, and one and all had the getting married and propagation of species as the central object for the yarn. Sometimes the hero would differ a little in regards to the details of getting the weather gauge of the sweet,

beautiful, fine, handsome girl — but the ends were all alike.

"No, sir, Mr. Gore, take my word for it, story-books and women, women and story-books — they are all the same in the end. They've kept O'Toole down for having them and you've worked your way up — to a certain extent — by not having them. A man should stick to his duty and let them alone until he gets old enough to understand them as I do."

He was a rough, outspoken man, was old Captain Crojack.

CHAPTER VIII.

DURING the next week the ship held her course to the eastward, carrying all sail, and as the lumpy gulf clouds disappeared on the western horizon, we hauled to the southward to pick up the northeast trade.

The effects of the storm were no longer visible. The dead sailor we buried the day after we ran out of it. The loss of this man and the one who was swept overboard by the sea that pooped us caused every one to be depressed in spirit for several days. But a man is soon forgotten when he loses the number of his mess. Great and small they drop out, and are never missed long afterward. In a little while the songs and croakings that accompanied an accordion belonging to the starboard watch told plainly that the few tears shed for a lost shipmate among our men were soon dried and forgotten. Miss Waters repeated her visits to the sick sailor when his

watch were on deck, and several times I saw her going forward with the third mate, carrying some gruel she had made for him.

Since her remarks to me about having been a sailor and living in a black hole of a fo'castle, she had said little to me. Her mother still kept to her bunk during meal hours, and I had escaped facing her, but the girl's studied coldness more than outweighed this pleasure.

I could hardly understand why she should object to a man who was a sailor, when her father and grandfather had both worked their way from the fo'castle to the quarter-deck. But, then, the woman's reasoning, I argued, was peculiar to herself and none the less obstinate for being illogical.

Although I was at first put out of temper by her remarks, I now saw that she devoted her attention almost entirely to young Brown when we were at meals together. This attachment appeared much more fitting for a girl of her years and position.

I cursed myself heartily for being such a fool as to allow her a moment in my thought.

What was I but a mate and a man nearly twice her age? In any case, I had no right to expect her to be more than half-civil to me.

As the weather grew warmer, after we picked up the northeast trade, it was pleasant on deck during the hours of the evening dog-watch. Captain Crojack was easy enough on his mates during good weather, so Brown and I got in the habit of sitting on the combings of the after hatch in the evenings smoking and spinning yarns while waiting for eight bells to strike.

Supper always took up nearly half of the two hours, and it was hardly worth while to turn in for the remainder of the watch if the weather was good.

O'Toole thought as the rest of us did upon this subject, for he invariably came on deck after his supper at the second table and smoked a short, black pipe while he spun his yarns.

People often wonder why sailors find it necessary to smoke and lie, after eating a hearty meal of salt junk and hardtack.

It is just as impossible to explain this as it is to tell why coal-heavers, or longshoremen, invariably put the receipts for their truck-loads into their hats. It is for some purpose that the sailor is so constituted. Perhaps good, hard, all-around lying promotes the digestion of salt food, by getting the system so thoroughly saturated with deception that the stomach believes the junk fresh. Whatever the purpose, it is probably a good one.

One night we were running along under skysails, with the trade abaft the beam. We heeled over gently and sent the foam-flakes swashing from the sides with a musical, tinkling sound.

The soft hum of the breeze through the rigging, coupled with the regular sound of the water, was very pleasing to the ears of Brown and myself as we lounged on the combings and smoked. It lacked half an hour of eight bells, and then we would relieve O'Toole, who stood at the break of the poop, lazily watching the canvas.

I dozed until the watch was called, and

then the second mate roused me and gave the ship's course, observing:

"'Tis no use av ye goin' aft whin th' owld man is there with th' leddies. He's in a divil av a timper because I made a remark to th' man at th' wheel an' th' young gurl an' her ma heard me. But he's always finding fault lately an' something seems t' be bearing down his mind, an', by th' saints, I believe 'tis nothing else than th' weight av his own opinion."

"He says you are a devil for story-books and women, O'Toole, and that's the reason you are such a bad second mate," I answered, smiling.

But O'Toole didn't laugh. He appeared thoughtful for some moments, and then said, with great earnestness: "Maybe I am, Mr. Gore, but is it right for th' owld man to say it? Is it right for a man who's had a good income and a handsome wife t' blackguard a poor divil av a mate because he can't have either, and say that it is his own fault? No, Mr. Gore, I spake for th' whole crowd av poor divils, like us, what no dacent woman'll

take up with. You may not be a bright man, Mr. Gore, savin' your prisence, but, by th' Prophet, I give ye th' credit av being a just one. But no matter, I'll say no more."

He was silent for a few moments, and then broke out afresh:

"Ha! Ha! 'Twas only yisterday, whin they turned th' roosters an' hens out on th' main-deck t' give thim an airing, that he began t' pitch into th' fowls thimselves. He chased a couple av thim from under th' break av th' poop, throwin' a belayin'-pin an' bawlin', 'Git out, ye ornery burds! Have ye got no regard for ayther time, place, or circumstance?' 'Pon me whurd, 'tis a wonder he didn't break out his Bible an' read one av th' tin commandments t' thim. It's a sky-pilot he's makin' av th' owld, rip-roarin' skipper he used t' be."

I went aft and found Crojack talking to the passengers, so, after saying a few words, I made some excuse to go forward again. O'Toole was still sitting on the hatch combings, talking to the third mate. I walked athwartships, under the break of the poop,

watching the canvas aloft and at the same time listening to scraps of the conversation.

"Faith, I don't mind gettin' th' blame for me own sins," he was saying, for he was still sore from Crojack's faultfinding, "but 'tis the takin' av other people's upon mesilf that makes me feel onhealthy. I've seen enough av the world t' know that it don't pay t' take overmuch responsibility.

"There was a case av th' kind happened aboard th' *Eagle,* frigate, whin I was captain av th' maintop, and used t' teach my fellows how t' swing a cutlass an' handle a pistol without making it safer t' be an inimy than a friend. This, av course, I did whin I was on deck.

"We was in Havana, an' 'twas hot work drillin' there, but it wouldn't have been so bad if th' owld man hadn't shut down on th' beer. As it was, th' men tried all kinds av ways t' get th' stuff on deck from th' shore. Sometimes they would try and concale it in their clothes, in order to get it aboard, but it was a poor way whin so many was thirsty.

"Finally, th' bhoys got hold av an idea to float th' stuff down th' tideway by th' keg at night, an' thin pull it aboard over th' cathead whin no one was lookin'.

"There was one divil av a Mike, that was always gettin' into scrapes, who paid a dago to start a keg one night about eight bells in th' first watch.

"He was on the lookout for it, an' got it aboard all safe enough, but th' officer av th' deck comin' for'ard at th' time, he was forced to concale th' stuff as quick as he could, an' he did this by rollin' th' stuff into th' bo's'n's locker.

"Ye see, th' bo's'n was a dead square and proper man, an' he niver broke a rule or disobeyed an order; so he thought it was safe.

"Somehow or other, th' officer, McGraw, wanted a cringle for something, an' av course he went straight for th' locker an' found it.

"Williams was called t' the mast an' asked t' explain how a keg av good beer made its way into his locker.

"Ye see, he had an idea that he must

shield th' feller Mike, who was no good whatever, an' made more trouble aboard than th' whole ship's company besides. So when Captain Broadchin asked th' question th' bo's'n got mighty quiet like, an' the old man had t' repeat th' askin' more'n onct. He looked awful glum and solemn when he did answer.

"'Whist!' sez he, in a deep, pious tone, 'faith, an' yer honour, I belave th' ship's ha'nted.'

"'What's that?' sez th' owld man.

"'Yes, sir,' sez he. 'I was walking for'ard, just afore eight bells, whin I see a keg av beer floatin' in th' air abaft th' fore riggin'. I knew 'twas 'gainst orders t' tech th' stuff, an' th' only way t' save the boys was to hide th' keg as soon as it lit on th' main-deck. How th' rest av th' watch missed seein' the keg floatin' past th' fore riggin' I can't make out at all, at all. But that's th' truth, th' whole truth, an' a divil a bit besides th' truth, s'help me Gawd!'

"Well, ye see, old Broadchin was so well satisfied with th' explanation that he niver

said another whurd, an' he believed so wel that he was a-tellin' av th' truth that h clapped him in irons an' kept him 'twee decks th' whole av' th' cruise.

"Whin he was discharged he was all brok in health, an' he got good an' drunk an' cam back t' say good-bye t' all hands, for he wa a good feller, even in liquor.

"'Good-bye, O'Toole, an' may th' Lor bless an' prosper ye,' sez he. An' thin h shakes hands all around an' comes aft where th' officers was sittin'.

"'Good-bye, Mr. McGraw, an' may th Lord bless an' prosper ye,' sez he t' th' liften ant. Then he walked up t' th' owld man.

"'Good-bye t' ye, too, sir,' sez he. 'Good bye, Captain Broadchin, an' may th' Lor bless an' prosper ye, too, sir — but to damned limited extint!'

"An' there was a good bo's'n gone, al because av that Mike. So I made up m mind thin an' there niver t' take anothe man's sins upon me sowl, nor shield any a his ornery doin's by mesilf."

Brown laughed a little at O'Toole'

account, and then said, with more earnestness than I thought the occasion required:

"After all, the bo's'n did the right thing, for it would have been rather a mean piece of business to have told how the beer came into his possession and gotten the whole watch in trouble."

"Not a bit av it — it would have saved a good bo's'n an' me a lot av rope's-ending upon th' hide av that good-for-nothing man, Mike."

"Well, I don't know about that," replied Brown, "I don't think much of a man who won't shield his friends. Suppose, for instance, you had a good friend or brother, and something occurred that might get him into trouble. Wouldn't you do what you could to keep him out of it?"

"Now, 'pon me whurd, if ye ain't entirely out av your reckoning. I'd see him forty fathoms below anywhere at all before I'd risk mesilf."

Brown rose from the hatch and gave a groan of disgust. Then he went aft on the quarter-deck, and all of that watch he ap-

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peared to be thinking over some interesting subject. He was so absorbed that he hardly spoke to me until midnight. Then he gave a sigh of relief, and, as O'Toole came to relieve us, we went below.

I stopped a few moments to take a bite of the salt junk set out on the cabin table for the mates. Afterward, seeing the light in his stateroom, I passed by his open door to see why a third mate should stay awake during his watch below.

There he sat in his bunk, with a great pile of the most flashy police reports of the period on the stool beside him.

"Come in, Mr. Gore," said he. "I have just made a fine haul of papers. Found them in that quartermaster's chest this morning. Take one; they are uncommonly interesting," and he gave me one with an enormous woman in tights pictured on the cover.

"Thanks," I said. "Good night," and I went to my room and turned in.

CHAPTER IX.

THE weather continued fair, and in three weeks we crossed the line in about twenty degrees west longitude.

We had seen but few vessels on the run down, but now sails were sighted almost daily.

Some of these were heavily loaded clippers, bound round Cape Horn, that had kept well to the eastward, in order to pick up the southeast trade as far over as possible and keep from getting jammed to the northward of Cape St. Roque.

As the northeast trade died out it left us entering the region of the doldrums, with its squalls and calms. We did well to carry the trade across the line, and then we drifted about for several days without making any southing to speak of. The southeast trade appeared to be well to the southward and the weather continued hot and calm.

One damp, overcast morning, a large ship appeared on the northern horizon, standing almost directly after us. She drifted along all day without coming near enough for Captain Crojack to make out who she was, and toward evening she disappeared in a thick smudge of rain.

After supper it cleared off, and the moon shone brightly over a sea of oily smoothness.

The ship astern had drifted quite close during the rain squall, and now she suddenly appeared on the port quarter not half a mile distant.

It was a pretty sight to see her there, with her canvas all glimmering in the moonlight, and all hands took a good look at her. She appeared innocent enough.

By and by the skipper made her out to be an Englishman, and he sat aft looking at her for a long time.

Mrs. Waters and her daughter came on deck and placed chairs, so they could sit and watch the stranger, for she was the only vessel that had come within hailing distance of us since we left port.

It is a strange feeling of fellowship that comes over people who are abroad on the wide ocean when they find themselves in the vicinity of an unknown vessel. There is as much interest taken in a strange ship at sea as there would be in one carrying dear friends on soundings.

While Captain Crojack and his passengers were gazing at the vessel astern the third mate came aft and seated himself close to Miss Waters.

The young girl and he conversed in low tones, so I could not hear what was said; but as she appeared to lose all interest in the ship, it is barely possible that they were not discussing nautical matters.

I can't explain why this irritated me. It may have been the effect of the moonlight, for the tropic moon has a powerful effect upon people if they sleep with it shining in their faces.

I was irritated and had just about concluded to put in a word to help the conversation, and was starting toward them, when

Crojack put down his night-glass with an impatient jerk.

"Where in thunder is that fellow heading?" he asked, turning and looking at me. "If he keeps on, he'll be aboard us in an hour or two.

"It's just the way with some of those thick-headed Englishmen! They'll come drifting down on you in a dead calm, and, before you know it, they'll be afoul of you and tear half the stunsails out of you, to say nothing of breaking the booms. It's nigh eight bells, so suppose you call the second mate and tell him to bring his speaking-trumpet and hail the fellow. To run foul of a ship during a blow is bad enough, but to run foul of one during a calm means that we might lay alongside for a week and roll everything out of us aloft, stunsail-booms and all."

Brown instantly started with me as I went forward, for the skipper brought his eye to bear on him and saw he was becoming unnautical with his niece. I sent him to call O'Toole.

"Wants me ter hail him, hey?" growled

the red-headed giant, as he tumbled out on the main-deck. "B' th' sowl av Saint Patrick, jist hearken ter me. If thim illigant leddies av his are below, ye will hear me talk Spanish t' th' bloody Englishmen, sich as ye niver heard before nor since. Hello! Wait a minit—" and the second mate, catching a glimpse of a dress in the moonlight, dived below again in a hurry.

As he had turned out just as he turned in, he had forgotten, in his eagerness, to put on his trousers.

He appeared again in a few minutes better attired for the quarter-deck. Then, growling something not very complimentary to passengers in general, he came aft.

"Hail that fellow and tell him to stand off before he drifts afoul of us," said the skipper. "Tell him there's room enough on the Western Ocean without crowding."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered O'Toole, as he walked to the rail and glared fiercely at the stranger astern.

"S' o—o—hoy!" he roared, in a voice like a fog-horn, and then stopped to listen.

He repeated the hail through his speaking-trumpet at the request of the skipper, although it was evident that he held such an instrument in high disdain and deemed any artificial acceleration to his voice as entirely unnecessary.

Soon a faint answer came floating over the calm, moonlit waters.

"What d' yer want?" it said.

"Stand off, or you'll be afoul of us!" roared O'Toole.

"Go to 'ell!" came the response, clear and distinct. Then the quiet of the tropic night fell again upon the sea.

"What a brute!" exclaimed Mrs. Waters. "I wonder how a man can be so coarse and vulgar. What is the matter with him?"

"It's a disease that afflicts a great many shipmasters, and it appears hard to cure," I ventured. "It's a—"

"Beggin' your pardon," interrupted O'Toole. "'Tis a disease I've had occasion t' cure often enough, an', by th' faith, I've always seen it give way, most rapid like, before th' inflooence av prayer, an' th' layin'

on av hands. I know av a case where a man—"

"By thunder!" snapped Crojack, suddenly, "if it falls as calm as this to-morrow I'll go aboard that fellow and see who he is. Mr. O'Toole, you will be on deck in the morning, and I wish you to have one of the boats ready. I've sailed in most seas and have met all kinds of people, but for a real out an' outer, with a loose jaw tackle, give me one of those swine-gutted, bull-headed, egotistical Englishmen in the Indian trade. Seems to me, though, I've heard that voice before."

"It's pretty hard to tell at this distance," I answered, "but we'll be able to find out very soon, for she's drifting down on us all the time."

The skipper remained quiet for some moments, gazing steadily at the stranger through his glass, so I took the opportunity to lean on the taffrail close to where Miss Waters sat in her chair. She was looking silently at the towering white cloud of canvas astern and her profile shone clear in the moonlight.

Her large blue eyes had a dreamy, stupid look in them as they gazed from under their long lashes, such as I had often noticed before in pretty women; but her skin had a rich, creamy colour about the throat, and the outlines of her willowy figure showed such beautiful curves that I suddenly found my eyes roving in a most uncomfortable manner from ship to girl and from girl to ship.

I don't attempt to explain it. It may have been the moonlight that made her look so pretty, but as I gazed I suddenly felt as if my blood had turned to melted lead in my veins. The heat of it made my face burn, and I could not utter a word, but I drew a long breath.

I shut my teeth hard and had just made up my mind to beat a retreat, when, to my dismay, she turned and looked me straight in the eyes.

The next instant she burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"Why, Mr. Gore, I didn't know you suffered so with asthma," she said aloud. "You must pardon me, but you really made such

a noise choking that I was quite frightened. I should think the night air was bad for you."

For an instant I felt as if the ship had sunk under me, but, as I caught the skipper's inquiring look, my nerve, which seldom deserted me, returned.

"Well, you see, I'm so used to walking fore and aft during my watch on deck that I don't notice it much while I'm in motion," I replied. "It's only when I get lazy and sit down that it affects me. After all, it don't amount to much, and serves as well as a pipe to keep me on the move during the night."

I noticed the old man scan the breadth of my beam with a quizzical look; for, you see, while I'm not as tall as some men, there is a certain heft to my shoulders even yet that is ill connected with a man weak in the wind.

However, my answer appeared to satisfy him, and I went below as quickly as possible, and turned in with a feeling of resentment against everybody on board the ship.

At midnight I turned out, and found the

stranger close aboard our port quarter, and O'Toole furious at the answer he had received on hailing him.

"He won't stand off, Mr. Gore," said the second mate as I came aft, "an' if it holds calm another hour he'll be alongside."

After O'Toole had gone below, I took the glass and watched the man who had just relieved the watch on her quarter-deck. He was not over fifty fathoms distant, and I could see that he was tall and wore a full beard.

Just below the stranger's white quarter-rail was a yellowish streak on her black hull, and on focusing the night-glass upon it I read *Countess of Warwick* in small gold letters.

She drifted steadily nearer and I hailed her again.

At that moment a sturdy, bow-legged man appeared on deck and joined the one I had been watching.

He came to the rail and stared at me for several minutes, and then answered in a deep, gruff, even tone:

"By the great eternal! Ain't this ocean big enough for you, that you must come wailing like a babe in the night? S'help me Gawd, when I sailed Yankee clippers there was little trouble in finding room enough in any ocean. This here lady is a real countess, and you needn't be afraid of her sassiety, even if she is a little fast. She won't foul them blooming stunsails of yours."

At the sound of this voice, which was now quite near and distinct, I heard a quick movement in the skipper's cabin, and I glanced down into it through one of the open ports.

Crojack had jumped out of his bunk and was in the act of swallowing a stiff drink of grog, — his usual toilet, — and as he finished it he bounded on deck with a series of sudden springs.

"Hello, there!" he bawled at the stranger.

His answer was a hoarse chuckle from the stout man, which swelled into a hearty laugh.

"Hello, there! Is that you, Bill Garnett?" repeated the skipper.

I heard the bow-legged man mutter something, and then take off his cap and mop his bald head, which shone in the moonlight.

"Well, sure enough, so it is," he finally answered.

"Who the devil would be sailing with such a cargo but me? Why in thunder didn't you tell me 'twas you, messmate? and I would have tried to put more water atween us — though there ain't no danger."

I had been watching him while he was talking, and I now recognized the old mate easily enough. Nearly every man in the deep-water trade at that time had seen or heard of old Bill Garnett.

"I might have known it was you," growled Crojack. "Always an ornery, bull-headed, headstrong mate, trying to make trouble. Why don't you keep off and give us more room?"

"Well, well, I am mate o' this craft, sure enough," laughed the old sailor, "but it ain't such a bad job alongside o' being a d——d, shad-bellied, thieving shipmaster.

As for room, you've got the whole ocean and can change your course as easy as my skipper can change his — but you was always a hard man to reason with."

And old Garnett began to walk fore and aft on his deck, chuckling audibly.

"I might have known it," repeated the skipper to himself. Then turning to me:

"I've had Garnett with me as mate six voyages, Mr. Gore, and I've never seen a more unreasonable critter in my life. What do you suppose he's doing on that Englishman, anyway? She looks mighty light for the India trade."

"I don't know why he should be on her, except for the pay," I replied. "Garnett's a rough mate and would just as soon sail under one flag as another. He's been under about all. The vessel does look uncommonly light."

The skipper stood watching the Englishman for some time, but as she appeared to draw no nearer, he finally went below. The *Arrow,* having no steering way, now drifted so as to bring the stranger almost head on,

so I could no longer see the men on her quarter-deck.

In the morning, after I had passed a restless night, I turned out with but little appetite for breakfast. I knew well enough what was the matter with me, and, had I been ashore, I would have put some distance between myself and our passengers.

I was about as awkward at the table as it was possible to be, but I dared not shirk the ordeal, for fear of making an idiot of myself before Captain Crojack.

It's all well enough to joke about such matters, and say they don't last, and that no man ever died for love, but joking don't help the case in any way whatever.

The cholera don't last long after it takes a man, either, for that matter. It's just as well to look the subject squarely in the face.

That no man ever died for love is an absurd statement. There are more men killed or ruined by this mental disturbance than any other.

That its origin is not purely physical even a deep-water sailor knows. That it don't

last is also certain, for nothing human ever does last above a certain limited time.

I have seen this passion burn itself out like a flash of tropical lightning, and I've seen it smoulder like the damp coal in a ship's hold and last until it passes quietly into the perfect friendship between an old man and an old woman.

But because it don't last, don't think that it lacks force while it does act.

I'm a plain man and known as "Bull Gore" among the deep-water men. My face is too big to be handsome, and I've the girth of forty-five inches around the heave of my chest. In spite of this, I knew I was going to have a tough struggle and would need all my strength for the fracas brewing within me.

Who is it, I say? Who is it that has felt this passion and can say no one was ever hurt or killed by it?

Why, I once saw a Japanese samurai pass his heavy two-handed sword through nine men in succession for —

Well, I'm not a young man, but I don't mean to be garrulous.

CHAPTER X.

I DON'T remember how I made out at the breakfast-table that morning, but as soon as I came on deck I looked for the *Countess of Warwick.*

She lay right abreast of us, and so close aboard that I could have flung a belaying-pin into her waist.

Our passengers went aft and sat in the shade of the spanker. They appeared very much interested in the English ship.

Her great black hull sat well in the water, though she was not loaded deep. At every roll of the swell I could see over her high t'gallant-rail and catch a momentary glimpse of the men on her main-deck.

Full rigged fore and aft, she showed a tremendous spread of canvas from her three skysail-yards to the foot of her courses. Her tall spars and long, tapering yards made

stunsails unnecessary, and the bright blackness of her standing rigging told plainly that she had a mate on board who understood his business.

Below, her copper showed a foot clear of the sea, and the water was so quiet and clear that the eye could easily follow it down under her bilge, where it seemed to give forth a soft, greenish sheen as the light fell on it at each swing of the hull.

At every roll of the swell her sails slatted against her masts and backed and filled with short, irregular jerks at the clews, until the rattle sounded like the distant roll of musketry.

While I stood looking at her, a short, slight man with red whiskers appeared emerging from the after-companionway. He wore a cap with a long visor, and a dark waistcoat flying loose and unbuttoned, which set off the semi-whiteness of his shirt-sleeves to great advantage. He stood looking at us a few moments, and then sung out:

"Hey there! where are you bound?"

"Hongkong, if you don't foul and roll the

gear out of us," answered Crojack, somewhat shortly.

"I will be aboard you in a minute," came the response, and the small skipper held up his hand as if to ward off any further conversation until he arrived.

"Mr. Garnett!" he bawled, as he advanced to the edge of the poop, "Mr. Garnett!"

"Ay, ay, sir," came the gruff response from somewhere directly beneath his feet.

The next instant the sturdy figure rose from the main-deck, and a shining bald head was furiously mopped within a foot of the skipper's knees.

"Mr. Garnett," roared the little captain, "get that port quarter boat overboard, sir, and don't keep me waiting here all the morning. Jump, now, for I can't abide waiting for a lazy, worthless set of loafers like your watch."

A hoarse growling followed this order, and instantly all was noise and action on the ship. The men rushed for oars and tackles,

and I was astonished at the large number of them in sight.

Above the turmoil could be heard some of Garnett's favourite oaths, which had more power of expression than any equal number of words before put together.

The tackles were hooked on, and in another minute the boat was over the side and ready.

"Give Mr. Carter the course, but tell him to lie by until we come aboard again, and don't keep me waiting here, but get into that boat and take me to the American clipper *Arrow*. Come, bear a hand there."

"Boat's all ready, sir," roared the mate, as he swung himself over the rail and dropped into her stern-sheets, red in the face with exertion.

"Are the cushions in her?" inquired the skipper, looking cautiously over the rail.

"Ay, ay, sir," came the answer.

"Is the compass and water-breaker stowed safe?"

"Ay, ay, sir, all safe, sir."

"Are provisions on board, in case we lose our bearings and can't get back again?"

"Ay, ay, sir, grub enough to last a week."

"Have you the 'navigator' with you?"

There was a moment of silence.

"Have you the 'navigator'? No! Well, how many times will I have to tell you, Mr. Garnett, never to start off on a cruise until you are ready? Get the 'navigator,' and be quick about it."

The mate climbed on deck again and went below, reappearing in a moment with the "navigator" tucked lovingly under his arm.

"All right, sir," he cried, as he dropped over into the boat.

At this the little skipper climbed carefully down into the mizzen channels and stepped into the stern-sheets, while the steward came to the rail and passed the skipper's coat to Mr. Garnett.

"Shove off! don't sit there looking at me," and the men let go and shoved clear of the vessel's side. Then they raised their oars to a peak.

"Let fall!" and the two oars clattered clumsily into the row-locks.

"Give 'way together!" and the boat shot out from the ship's side and came toward us.

"Git on to th' style av th' Johnnie Bull," chuckled O'Toole, who had just come on deck; "wan would think 'twas a man-o'-war sindin' out a bloomin' admiral. Now, b' th' faith av th' howly saints! Who's the mug I see squattin' there in th' stern-sheets? Garnett! B' th'—"

"In bow! Weigh enough!" cried the little skipper, as the boat with six sweeping strokes fell alongside.

The next instant he sprang over the rail on to our main-deck, closely followed by his mate.

Then he deliberately put on his coat, waved Garnett to stand back, and approached Captain Crojack with a majestic step.

"Captain Webster, sir, yes, sir; Captain Webster of the *Countess of Warwick,*" he

cried, as he reached the quarter-deck, where our skipper stood.

"Ah, did I hear aright? Crojack? Captain Crojack, I'm most happy to meet you, sir; most eternally tickled. Ah, your wife and daughter, I see. Madam, I bow to you. It gives me most uncommon pleasure, miss; yes, I may even say delight. But now, sir," he cried, turning suddenly upon Crojack, "what is this row about, and what do you mean by hailing me and ordering me to stand off?"

His attack upon the skipper was so sudden that Crojack staggered back a pace or two in amazement and stared with open-eyed wonder at the little man, while his features worked convulsively as if he didn't know whether to laugh or throw his guest overboard.

"Come, come, sir; I can't waste all the morning here. Do you see that flag, sir?" and he pointed to the British ensign that hung in folds from his vessel's peak.

"That is her Majesty's flag, sir, and I'm her Majesty's most humble servant, though

a most uncommon man, sir; and if there's anything I can do for you, sing out. Don't stand there staring at me, sir. There's nothing aggravates me so, sir, as to have a man stare at me. Come, come, don't be afraid of me," and he held out his hand in a friendly manner.

"Gee-whillikins!" gasped Crojack.

"Nothing of the kind, sir; not at all. Lionel Webster, if you please, and an extraordinary man in some respects, if I do venture to say so myself. Come, come, don't be afraid. But, ah! Maybe the subject will not bear discussion before the ladies, in which case we'll go below, sir; yes, sir, quite out of sight, sir," and he grasped Crojack's hand and led him like a man who is not quite awake down the companionway into the after cabin.

As they disappeared, I turned to meet Garnett, who, with O'Toole, had stood silently watching the skippers in order to render any assistance if necessary.

"Well, well, 'pon me whurd, for a fact! So it's you, you old bald-headed, bow-legged

bean-swiller. Sure, there's no mistaking that stove-in figurehead av yourn. Say, but I'm glad t' see ye again, messmate. My, how it brings back the times we windjammers used t' have together, 'mongst th' archipelagoes. Well, well, 'pon me whurd, how is it you are afloat again, an' on a bloody Johnnie Bull at that?"

"Don't meddle with family affairs, shipmate. If a respectable married man chooses to follow the sea for a living, why, there i is. There is no more pious calling than a mate's, as you might know yourself. Bu by the eternal thunder! I wonder they allow a man with a head like yours aboard a vesse carrying soft coal and oil in bulk. May th eternal fire swinge me, but you are a freckle faced, red-headed bulldog —

"You say you're for China?"

Then he turned to me.

"Ah, Mr. Gore, blast me, but it does m good to get amongst the old crowd. Seem like we'll have a spell o' weather, hey?' and the old mate mopped his bald head with a dirty red handkerchief.

I shook hands with him and told him I was glad to see him again, for, although he was an old man, he was active yet, and knew more about handling square canvas than any man living.

I'm not a man to bemoan my luck, like nearly all sailors, and when I find I'm down I make the best of it. So when old Bill Garnett — who had been mate with my father a score of years before — looked askance at me and called me Mr. instead of captain, knowing my rating, I shook his hand and sat beside him on the main hatch.

Once in the shade of the mainsail the old mate fixed himself comfortably and took from his coat pocket a small nickel-plated vial, at which he sniffed loudly.

"What in th' name av the saints have ye got yer fins on now?" asked O'Toole, who had seated himself opposite. He stared in wonder at the operation while the odour of peppermint filled the air.

"Blarst me if I know," grunted Garnett, still sniffing violently at the vial.

"What! peppermint? Ye coom t' that in

yer owld age? 'Pon me whurd, 'twas a different odour ye used to carry about ye."

"I ain't as young as I was onct, and that place in my head troubles me more as I grows older. This little thing was sold to me by a fellow on the beach, who said it was good for things in the head, an' he wasn't the biggest liar I ever knew, for it does me a power o' good, 'specially at night. You see, I'm too old, anyway, to be cruising about much longer, and if it wasn't for the money to be gotten out of a cargo like we carry, I would stay on the beach. Then, again, there's family affairs that makes me want to feel the heave of a ship's deck under me once more; but these are private matters and don't concern no one but the parties involved.

"This here little thing's called 'Killakoff Kurakold,' which, the fellow said what sold it to me, was Roosian for neuralg'a cure; but it has an almighty Yankee smack to it. After all, when a man gets along toward his last cruise, like me, he has to take some things for granted — an' he sees the value of lead-

ing an unselfish life, and that the only real pleasures are those what relieve sufferings of others."

"'Pon me whurd, you have got it down mighty fine. Th' very whurds old Father Easyman used t' say; an' I do belave th' medicine has virtue whin it kapes an owld memory alive like that. 'Sufferin's av others,' hey! Which goes t' show yer mane th' fellow what invented that little instrument was a thrue philanthropist, an' a man after yer own heart."

"I don't remember hearing those words before, — leastways, not put in that way, — but if you mean to say I didn't make them up myself, why, I suppose you're right," growled Garnett.

"As for making words brand-new, it's a trade I don't go into much. All words I ever seen or heard, except some in foreign languages, was invented long afore I was afloat, — such as Tom, Bill, and the likes. You say that dapper chap there, talking to Johnson, is third mate? S'help me! I suppose old man Crojack will be shipping sky-

pilots and holy Joes next," and he carefully replaced his vial in his pocket, while he listened to Brown talking to one of the boat's crew who had climbed on deck.

"He's the best mate I ever sailed with," I said, as I saw the look of disdain gathering on the old mate's face. "But tell us how you came to be aboard an Englishman, and what kind of a cargo it is that pays so well. You say you are bound for the Andamans?"

"I'm coming to that now," he replied, "if you'll just give a man time to get his bearings," and he reached into his pocket and drew forth an enormous piece of plug tobacco. He bit off a couple of ounces and began to manipulate the quid so as to get it securely stowed in his cheek while he replaced the remainder of the plug in his pocket.

He then drew a long breath, as if about to begin his yarn, and squirted a huge mouthful of tobacco juice on to the clean white deck.

"You see, when I married —"

"Here, Bill, get a swab an' wipe up th' dirty mess," cried O'Toole to a sailor. "This ain't no bloody Johnnie Bull, an' we don't make no pig-pen av the main-deck. But go ahead, messmate; there's a swab for ye, an' ye can take snap shots at it betwixt breaths. Leave it lay, Bill."

Garnett scowled at the sailor, who dropped the swab; then, taking no further notice of the interruption, he began.

CHAPTER XI.

"As I was saying, when I married and settled down amongst the hills to the east-'ard o' the Sacramento, I thought I'd about served my time on deep water and had come on the beach for good. You see, I married old man White's daughter — he was a brother to Skipper White, what sailed that race with old man Gore around the Cape — and, as the gal was young and had helped keep house for the old man, I reckoned we'd get along first-rate. But there was bad blood in that White family. The old man had run a boarding-house down by the St. Joe Mission, and he was a bad man. His wife's brother, Skipper Anderson, had done some queer things, and had got a hard name on the West Coast long ago, when I was with him. So, you see, there was bad blood in the family.

"After I had married and bought a little farm, I just settled down, peaceful like, and waited for the family to increase and multiply. You can bet I was some astonished one day, about two months afterward, when I found the family had increased and multiplied all of a sudden like.

"So I went to the fellow what sold me this vial — which cures most things in the head — and he told me there was no accounting for the strange and curious things what happen along in the course o' nature. At first, though, he began on science, and told me there was no explanation unless I could follow him through a lot o' stuff what was writ in a book in a foreign language. He had just about convinced me that all was right when he began on the course o' nature.

"I ain't much when it's a question of science or foreign languages, but I'm way up as high as a skysail truck when it comes down to the course o' nature. So I told him I guessed it was a family affair, and that I wouldn't be missed much if I left the valley.

"He grinned some, and told me I was a suspicious old duffer, and I smashed a bottle of castor-oil over his figgerhead, and started for 'Frisco.

"You see, I had a bit o' stuff left out of that deal on the Clipperton Reef, where we dived for gold in a couple of fathoms of water as it lay in the bilge of the *Isabella.* I reckoned to live easy enough without standing watch. I wouldn't trust to them banks, so I had the stuff in bills stitched in a belt around my waist. When I got to town, a man came up to me with a rush and grabbed me by the hand, and he was no other than that rascal mate of Hollender's what got two years for an incident on a voyage to Havre.

"I wasn't glad to see the fellow, as I always had a liking for clean company. But I was feeling lonesome. He just fell down and rolled over with laughing, saying: 'Oh, it can't be true, it can't be true. Oh, no, no, no; it can't possibly be true. It ain't so. There ain't no such luck.' And he laughed so hard that the tears rolled down out of his

little, fishy eyes. All the time swearing that, of all men, he was most pleased to meet his old shipmate Garnett.

We went about town and took a few drinks together, and he kept on laughing and telling me how glad he was to meet me again. I paid for the drinks, and I guess I drank some.

"The next morning when I woke up, I didn't have a thing left in the world but the shirt I slept in. The scoundrel would have taken that, too, if it hadn't fitted me so tight. He even took my old shoes.

"There I was, half-naked, a-roarin' an' bellowin' for further orders, till they clapped me into the calaboose for a crazy, half-drunken old sailor. They gave me some togs after I got sober enough to put them on, and, as I had nothing left in the world, I had to sign on, and I soon finds myself in Liverpool.

"But it was all them clothes' fault I took to this job. Them Samaritans wot lives intirely fer the sake o' others mostly fumigates all their clothes o' the clink. Like-

wise the smell o' the sulphur sticks in them, an' somehow I must have smelt like a gorilla, fer as soon as I heaves in sight o' any one, they puts their fingers to their noses and sheers off. Sink me, Mr. Gore, that was a fine odour I carries about me, an' if ye object to a bit o' peppermint salts, — which is good fer the head, — yer ought ter smelt me then.

" I asked a man fer a job buildin' a house, — not as I ever had a hand at buildin' afore, but he just sheers off and coughs, an' calls me a stinkin' skunk, and I heaves a brick at him. Then I tries a store sellin' meat, but they sicks the dog on me, and I heaves away again.

" 'Twas that way everywhere I goes. Nobody would stand near me an' listen to my tale. I couldn't shuck the clothes, and I couldn't get clear o' the smell. So I finally starts down alongshore, where the smells is so mixed there's no tellin' which stinks the worst.

" Here I runs across this Webster, who is cousin to old man Jackson at the Falklands,

and who is the most uncommon damn fool, as he says himself."

"'Pon me whurd, he's got the proper man for a mate to back him, thin," observed O'Toole.

"I do know something about handling canvas," answered Garnett, taking the remark for a compliment; "but may I eternally stew if I don't speak the truth when I says it takes a m-a-n to handle those gangs about decks."

"What air ye pratin' about, man? Do ye mane yer own watch?"

"Now, stave me endwise if you ain't the same red-headed idiot you always was," growled Garnett. "Calling a watch a gang! Lord love ye, man, there are one hundred and twenty men atween decks o' that clipper, and every mother's son is an out an' out, all around —"

"Steady, steady, mate," I said. "Those ladies will hear you if you don't brace up that tongue of yours."

"D'ye mane t' say ye are a convict ship?" cried O'Toole, in amazement.

I tried to conceal my astonishment, but O'Toole jumped up and stood on the hatch, staring hard at the Englishman. "'Pon me whurd, it is so, fer a fact. Now may the prophet sind us a good wind to waft us from sich company. B' th' faith av the howly saints, Garnett, I never thought it. 'Pon me whurd I didn't. Now that's a cargo I don't want to sail with, an' ye must be way down, shipmate, when ye drop t' th' carrying av a lot av human cattle. Lord! One hundred and twenty poor divils goin' ter hell as fast as Bill Garnett can pilot them. So that's the whyfore ye are headed for the Andamans."

"Sure," was Garnett's laconic answer.

"But you don't turn to the whole gang at once, do you?" I asked.

"How in the name of thunder can ye turn to a hundred and twenty men in irons," answered the old mate, with a grin. "Turn them out in small gangs, man. Poor devils they be, sure enough, but they get plenty of exercise atween decks when the old hooker gets a-switching into it, when it comes on to

blow. Besides, those ports you see painted on her sides there are not all make-believe. Some of them will open and let in the air, when the hatches make it too close. I've been in worse places than that 'tween decks on that ship, and I never was a convict, either."

"I've heard tell that law and justice were two things av an ontirely different nature," grunted O'Toole, without removing his gaze from the convict ship.

"S'help me, 'tis a fact," chuckled Garnett, "and I onct heard a skipper say that he had onct met a man who was a bigger fool than Larry O'Toole, — but he couldn't call to mind exactly who the fellow was."

While the mates were chaffing each other, an uproar arose from the after cabin.

I could distinguish Crojack's hoarse voice, raised to a pitch that I knew meant danger to some one. The cabin skylight was open, and the voices of both skippers seemed to come from just beneath it.

"D'ye mean to say that England owns

the whole Western Ocean?" roared the old man.

"Up to within three miles of any beach whatever," cried the little Englishman. "But don't bellow at me, sir; I'm not deaf, and I won't allow any one to bellow at me, sir."

"Well, by gorry! England don't," roared Crojack.

"I decline to argue the case any further with you, sir," replied the small skipper, "but I'll head my course just the same. You have a most uncommon voice, sir, also most extraordinary good grog. So fill my glass and don't sit there bellowing at me, sir. Nothing aggravates me more than a man bellowing at me. Don't do it, I say, or I'll go —"

"You may go to hell!" roared Crojack.

"I may, sir, indeed I may, but" — then came a pause during which I could hear the clink of glasses — "if I do, sir, I'll head a straight course, sir, and arrive there shipshape with my yards squared, so her Maj-

esty'll have no cause to be ashamed of me, though I sincerely hope — "

Then the voice of the little skipper drew away, and I glanced at the door of the companionway just as his cap appeared above the combings.

As he stepped on deck he bowed to the ladies and proceeded, with great deliberation, to put on his coat. He had removed it during the discussion below.

"Madam," said he, addressing Mrs. Waters, "I should extend the hospitality of my ship to you — that is, I would invite you to do me the honour of a visit — were it not that the cargo we carry is unworthy of inspection. I, therefore, wish you a pleasant voyage, and trust your husband will learn moderation from you. If not, he will prove a most uncommon and extraordinary companion for you," and he waved his hand at Crojack, who stood on the top step of the companionway. The little skipper then walked quietly to the break of the poop and sung out lustily for Mr. Garnett. Captain

Crojack remained aft, his face wearing an expression of extreme ill humour.

Garnett was within two fathoms of his master, but he sprang to his feet at the hail and answered, "Ay, ay, sir," in hurricane tones.

"Mr. Garnett, is the boat ready?"

"Yes, sir, all ready, sir," bawled the old sailor as he glanced at the two men of his crew. They immediately sprang over the rail and dropped into her.

"Is all the gear in her?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Then take me aboard my ship as quick as you can, for I've wasted all the morning talking to a blockhead." And he made his way over the side without a word of farewell to Crojack. Garnett followed instantly, and in a few moments they were back again on board the Englishman.

From our decks we could hear the old mate bawling orders to a crowd of sailors, who hooked on the tackles and whisked the small boat on to its berth almost before the skipper had walked aft to the poop.

"I FOUND TIME TO DO SOME WORK UPON THE WHEEL GEAR."

CHAPTER XII.

IT remained calm all that day, and the two vessels were in close proximity. Miss Waters sat aft under an awning rigged over the after part of the poop and gazed down at the smooth surface of the sea. Small objects went floating slowly downward through the clear medium, sending scintillating rays of light as they twisted with the motion. I found time to do some work upon the wheel gear, for the calm weather permitted the unreeving of the tackles as the vessel would not steer. Between times I had a small chance to sit upon the taffrail and answer certain questions that only a mate is expected to answer to passengers. Miss Waters seemed preoccupied and took more than usual interest in the movements of Brown, who seemed willing to aid me in my work by keeping as close to me as pos-

sible. Twenty-five feet beneath the surface of the sea the keel of the *Arrow* showed above the void beneath all. Miss Waters was gazing down absently into the depths when she suddenly made out a vague form, brownish yellow in the light, as all objects appear at great depths. The form grew larger, undulating, waving, but steadily increasing in size. Then, at a depth of about fifty feet the shape of a giant turtle appeared.

"Look," she cried, "what a monster! What can it be?"

Brown looked over the rail, but failed to make the animal out. I saw the turtle would come to the surface, and called two men to get a boat ready.

"Looks like a logger-head," I said, "and, if you care to, you can have the sport of catching him."

"I certainly will, then," she cried, and sprang up ready to get into the small boat. Crojack hardly liked the proceedings, but I made it all right with him by a promise of a fine turtle steak for supper. Then, getting the whale-irons, of which we had

two aboard, into the small boat, I called Brown and two men to get into her, and we were soon alongside the *Arrow*.

"Come," I said to Miss Waters, "let us see what kind of a sailor you are, for, if you can get in and out of a small boat while the *Arrow* is rolling in this swell, you can prove yourself."

She sprang instantly into the mizzen channels, disdaining the help offered by Crojack, and then dropped lightly into the small boat's bottom. We were all ready and shoved clear of the ship's side.

The turtle had risen to the surface of the sea about ten fathoms distant, but, on seeing the ship and hearing the noise, he had sounded again. However, I knew he would soon reappear, and I forthwith made my way forward and made an iron ready for him. We rowed silently over the oily ocean, keeping a sharp lookout for the game. The two ships seemed suddenly very small and distant, and the vastness of the sea became apparent. It is always that way, and when a person has never been upon the broad sea

in a small boat, the very greatness of the surrounding space affects one. Miss Waters seemed subdued, and I noticed that she was gazing anxiously now and then at the *Arrow* that lay wallowing and rolling like a log.

"I don't think we better go too far away, do you?" she asked.

"That turtle will take us a long way before we get him," I answered. "If you are afraid, we will go back."

She blushed a trifle at this.

"We'll not go back until you show us whether you are able to get him or not," she said, with some spirit.

That settled it. We would get him if there was any show. I liked the spirit of the girl. Brown said nothing.

"Aye tank dat's him, sur, right over dere t' starboard," said the Swede pulling the stroke oar. The head of the turtle rose slowly above the surface and remained there. We stopped the boat, and waited for him to get quiet before starting to creep upon him. Then, with great caution, we sent the craft drifting slowly toward him, the oars mak-

ing no noise. I held the iron ready, and waited until we were within a couple of fathoms. Then I plunged the weapon through his forward flipper, and it toggled fast. We had him.

But he was a determined monster, and he weighed nearly five hundred pounds. He started off across the ocean, and, in spite of all our efforts, we could not stop him. Hauling the line short, we poked him and jabbed him with the boat-hook, but he heeded this very little, keeping his head well down and drawn in out of the way. All the time he swam vigorously with his flippers, and we found that we were gradually getting a long way from the ship.

"If we only had something to kill him with," said Brown.

"Aye tank I do it, den," said the Swede, who had been most interested in the affair; "I catch 'em in de old country — so."

He drew his sheath-knife and lashed it firmly upon the butt-end of the boat-hook. Then he went forward and leaned over the bow, while we hauled the boat as close to

the turtle as we could. Watching his chance, the sailor made a lunge, and drove his blade through the creature's neck. This had the effect of slowing down his efforts, although it far from finished him. Wounded and harassed as he now was, we gained upon him, and in ten minutes had him landed safely in the bottom of the boat, although he almost swamped the craft in his final struggles.

"He's big and ugly enough for anything," said Miss Waters. "Do you mean to eat the monster?"

"He will make excellent steak for all hands," I answered. "However, if you don't like him, we might swap some of him for a piece of fresh pork. They have pigs aboard the *Countess of Warwick,* and Garnett told me they would probably kill one to-day. What do you say, shall we go aboard of her?"

"By all means. I would like nothing better," she answered.

I looked at the cloudless sky. There was not the slightest sign of a breeze. I determined to risk old man Crojack's wrath.

Then I remembered that I was responsible for the young woman. I had taken her out upon the open ocean almost without her uncle's consent. We had drifted over a mile from the ship, and, although the weather promised to remain calm and clear, we were on the edge of the equatorial belt, and squalls would soon be of hourly occurrence.

"I reckon we better not go aboard her without first getting the captain's permission," I said.

"I suppose you are afraid to," she answered. "Two officers in one small boat, and not able to do things without permission."

"I take no responsibility at all," said Brown, "but I think Mr. Gore is right. Better keep on the good side of the old man, and we may be able to go again to-morrow."

"A man who is good because afraid to be bad is a mighty mean fellow, I allow," I said; "but that isn't the nature of the emotion which governs me in this case."

"You have so many queer emotions, I hardly know what to think at times," she

answered; "but, if you want to go back aboard the *Arrow,* why, go ahead. I'm simply a passenger. And then, I'm not especially fond of pork, even if we haven't had fresh meat for a month or two."

"Nevertheless, you shall have some to-morrow, if they do their killing," said Brown. "As for me, I'll eat turtle. One don't get good fresh turtle every day. Besides, the day after to-morrow is Thanksgiving Day."

"The pig is the turkey of the seamen," I said, and I noticed the face of the Swede pulling the stroke oar beam in anticipation. "They'll certainly kill pork soon on board that 'Johnny Bull.' It's a pity the old man didn't bring something besides those stringy fowls along with him."

"It seems so funny to have Thanksgiving with a temperature of ninety, and with thin linen clothes," said Miss Waters. "I'd forgotten all about it."

We came alongside the *Arrow,* and a line of heads poked over the waist, for the men had seen our catch and were curious. A

tackle soon heaved the turtle on deck and then we followed, but I left the small boat to tow astern in a most unseamanlike manner, for I had plans for the morrow.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE *Countess of Warwick* had drifted off during the night and was a good two miles away to the eastward when the hot equatorial sun burned his way into a mass of heavy clouds upon the horizon the day after we caught the turtle. Lumpy masses of cumuli lined the horizon, and solid quadrilaterals, slanting with well-defined edges, reached from them to the sea beneath, showing that we might expect the tropical rainpour. Now and then a slight air ruffled the surface of the ocean, but it came from almost anywhere, and we made no headway on our course. I could see that Garnett had clewed up his courses on the *Warwick* to keep his heavy canvas from slatting out with the rolling of his ship, and O'Toole had done our own up in a similar manner. The hot, damp air of the early morning was fresh with the salt dew, and the decks and rails were stream-

ing with the moisture. Sounds from forward were heard distinctly, and even the low voices of men conversing in the forecastle were carried aft. The clatter of pans and pots in the galley told of a busy "moke," but the weather was too warm for any great appetite. I had slept badly and was in no good humour, so with great perseverance I kept clear of the main-deck to avoid trouble. At that time in the morning a ship's officer is hardly more than human, and a man in my condition is generally a little less. I stood upon the break of the poop and watched O'Toole sitting upon the main hatch smoking a short pipe. He was in his undershirt and was very warm.

"'Tis a bit warm, or I'd lick th' whole av th' ship's company," said he to a Dutchman, who strolled past toward the galley for his watch's breakfast.

"Vat I do, I do noddings, sur," said the fellow, edging away.

"Och, 'tis fer that alone I'd whale ye, Dootch. Kape away from me, fer I'm th' divil while this weather lasts. Git."

"Good marnin', Mr. Gore," he continued, without taking his pipe from his mouth, "I'm havin' steak an' eggs fer th' order, an' may ye enjoy yer vittles. 'Twas a foine burd, that baste ye caught, fer within him ware no less than a hundred eggs. If ye want to take a slice av him over to Garnett an' that Captain Webster, 'tis all ready fer ye. I'm clane homesick fer a bit av pig, an' 'twill be a good deal if ye can make a trade. 'Tis uncommon warm."

"O'Toole," said I, "you're a big, red-headed, ugly ruffian, and you've that to be thankful for. If you were anything else, I'd come down off this poop and knock the insolence out of you. If you want that pig, you go after it yourself, and don't you go giving me instructions."

The second mate grinned.

"'Twas no offence I meant, sir, but, sink me, if ye want ter try a small bit av a dispute, I'll accommodate ye, sure," and he rolled up a sleeve, showing an arm of power.

I knew he had been thinking of how I'd

go in the small boat with Miss Waters, and it was none of his business. That and the hot morning made me quarrelsome. At the same time I had no intention of coming down off the quarter-deck, at least at his invitation. The steward was bringing the breakfast aft, and I had a means of evading the issue.

"You think too much and work too little, O'Toole," I said, starting for the forward cabin in the wake of the meal.

"Go to th' divil," said the officer, and he whisked a match along the seat of his trousers and relit his pipe.

Brown had shaved and looked clean when he appeared at the table. I felt he had no business there, for it is always the third mate's place to eat with the carpenter, steward, and the rest. I never like special arrangements for officers with a pull. The two ladies and Captain Crojack came in from the after cabin, Miss Waters dressed in a white muslin frock which fitted her splendid figure and made her bare arms and throat look all the whiter. Crojack had put

on a clean duck suit, and took his seat with a quizzical look along his table.

"It's a good thing to have passengers aboard ship at times," said he, "for it calls forth the razor and brush. I remember the time when I could hardly tell who was who aboard this ship, for the matted hair and beards which hid the faces of the mates. That steak looks good. It won't hurt you to eat as much as you can. The 'doctor' boiled a piece of silver with a chunk of the turtle meat, and it was as bright as glass after he was through. Turns black — jet-black — if the fish or turtle meat is poisonous. I've eaten dolphin boiled with a silver dollar and had it blacken. It broke out in boils all over me within two days."

"The dollar?" I asked, with some concern.

Crojack looked at me askance. He was not aware of my humour, but was a bit suspicious.

"No, the dolphin," he said, slowly.

Miss Waters smiled, but Brown looked hard into his plate.

"I once knew a man," I ventured, "who had figures of women — and ships — all over his body. They were tattooed on him, to be sure, but I don't quite call to mind ever having seen a man with 'dolphins.'"

"There are so many things a young fellow of your age hasn't seen, it would tire one out to tell of them," said the skipper, good-humouredly. "Better have another piece of turtle."

I took it and ate doggedly, while the old man held forth upon the evils of fresh pork in the tropics.

However, in spite of the heat and mugginess of the air, Miss Waters managed to get her own way. Crojack allowed her to go with the boat to the *Countess of Warwick*. The English ship lay motionless and at a distance which put the skipper in a better humour. He would not go himself, especially after seeing what manner of man her captain had shown himself, but I went with two men and Miss Waters, taking half the turtle along with us, some old American

papers and magazines, and some bottled beer.

"This is like yachting," I said, as I settled myself in the stern-sheets and made the young lady comfortable. "If going to sea would only consist of this sort of thing it would not be so intolerably lonesome and monotonous."

"I suppose I should feel flattered, but I'm at present more interested in the English ship," said Miss Waters. "Do you think the little skipper will allow us aboard?"

"He made it a point not to invite you, surely," I answered. I was in no very good humour even yet, and the girl deplored it.

The row across the intervening space of ocean was made rapidly, for the sea being perfectly smooth, the small boat, propelled by two strong men, sheared its way easily through the surface. The sun rose higher above our heads and the heat was intolerable.

Arriving alongside, I saw Garnett leaning over the rail amidships, gazing down at us. He was joined by half the watch, and then he pulled out his little vial and

sniffed at it hard while he mopped his bald head.

"Now that's what I call sailorizing, fer a fact," said he. "Sink me, Mr. Gore, but that's the way all mates should go about, with a trim little tender alongside. What have ye got? Beef? Beer? I'll call the old man — wait."

"Hold on," I cried, "wait until I —"

But it was too late, the old mate had gone aft, and in a moment he was calling down the cabin companionway to his master.

"I hev to report a small boat alongside, sir," said Garnett, in a loud tone, sticking his head under the slide of the hatchway. Captain Webster was evidently dozing, for he made no answer at once. Then the mate repeated the hail.

"Boat alongside? Tell him to get away at once," came the voice, now aroused. "What does he mean by coming alongside? Who is it, that Yankee?"

"'Tis the mate an' a young lady, an' they've got some beer, bull-beef, an' a lot o' papers fer you, sir."

"Get that accommodation ladder over the side, Mr. Garnett, and ask the lady aboard. Don't keep her waiting, — jump, or I'll come on deck myself."

CHAPTER XIV.

HE was a strange little skipper, Captain Webster, and he asked us aft with some civility, making sundry comments at the insolence of our master, who had the impudence to question his right upon the high seas. We were ushered below and not allowed to remain upon the deck in the hot sun. I saw several men who wore arms, and noticed a gun-rack at the foot of the stairway. But Webster was garrulous and took the trouble to answer no questions. He showed Miss Waters over the cabin, taking her through the forward room, where he had quite a lot of ferns and plants ranged in pots upon a sort of dais. It interested the girl very much to see a miniature greenhouse aboard a ship in mid-ocean, and she spent some time examining the plants. Garnett followed me below and announced that,

if we would wait a little, we would have a side of short-ribs to take back for our pains. They were just starting to work upon a couple of hogs as we came aboard. The beer he appreciated very much indeed; as for the papers, he could tell better after he had read them.

As it is always the custom to make presents of whatever vegetables, meat, or other commodity prized by the sailor when deep-water ships are becalmed in company, we showed our appreciation by waiting. I was talking to Garnett and his mate, a tall lanky Scotchman, when a loud noise from forward caused us to listen. There were hoarse cries, deep groans, and above all a steady rush of trampling feet, which told of a desperate struggle. I looked for my charge, Miss Waters, and saw her coming through the cabin doorway, while Webster rushed for the deck. The rest of us followed without delay, and, as we reached the open air, a scene of strife met our gaze. They were after a hog of uncommon size, and the animal was making the fight of his life.

Garnett seized a belaying-pin — his favourite weapon — and his mate grabbed a bar. The next instant they were in the fracas.

Knowing Miss Waters was safe in the saloon, I made my way to the break of the poop to see the scrimmage, and as I did so the animal came racing down the deck.

The cook who had him in charge made the first pass, and ripped the skin of the animal's neck enough to madden him, and in ten seconds the beast had broken away and was in full career on the lower deck. Men crowded after him, flung themselves upon him, stabbed, fought, and struggled, but the noble beast tore his way clear of all obstacles and dragged the entire watch into the forward cabin, smashing through doors and furniture until it looked as though a cyclone had ripped through the ship. All attempts to seize his legs and trip him were in vain. One man, clasping him boldly about the neck, was carried until scraped off against a bulkhead like a barnacle on a pile. Two men, each holding to his hind legs, were

dragged the entire length of the ship amid the cheers of their comrades, who in turn seized their own legs and endeavoured to hold them back. At the turn of the cabin door a dozen more men fell upon the animal and endeavoured by sheer weight to hold him down. The captain coming down the poop steps to see the fracas was struck by the moving mass of men and hog, and he disappeared beneath them, to emerge a moment later covered with blood and glory. For ten minutes the noble animal made his fight, dodging past hatchways, through open doors, and with never less than five, and generally more than fifteen, stout seamen in his wake. Cheered on by the cook and first officer, and spurred to desperation by the curses of the thoroughly indignant captain, the men fought until their clothing was in rags and the perspiration poured from them. The modern game of football would have made a poor showing on that ship's deck, for, in spite of all massed plays, the pig would gallantly emerge from the pile of rolling seamen, and with a steady "Hough,

hough," raised in battle-cry, charge again and again. For a long time the savage play was kept up until the men looked as though they belonged to the boarding party of a hostile ship. They finally conquered. For their hard-earned victory, the captain rewarded them with the four feet of the hero, about enough meat upon them to satisfy the ship's cat.

In less than ten minutes afterward, we had a prime piece of pork in our small boat, along with some apples Webster had managed to save, and we were ready for the row back aboard the *Arrow*.

The little skipper of the *Countess of Warwick* came to the side and ushered Miss Waters over in a most gallant manner.

"It has given me great pleasure, madam, I might say even delight, to have had the honour of your society upon my ship. You may tell your insolent uncle that I forgive him his trespass upon me this voyage, for this is the day of all days we should be thankful that we are in no worse condition than that in which we find ourselves. I bid

you farewell. It is now time that I let some of my cargo out upon the deck for an airing."

We shoved off and started back, and in a few moments it seemed that the decks of the *Warwick* were crowded with men. I made no comment, for there was little use of calling the girl's attention to their garb. The ship lay at some distance and the sun was very hot, so I let the men row slowly.

Suddenly the sunshine seemed to grow dimmer. I looked around over the calm ocean, and noticed what looked to be a sort of mist close aboard.

"Aye tank something is going to happen," said the man rowing the bow oar. "Look, sur, at the ship."

Turning, I saw the light canvas coming in by the run. The noise of gear sounded distinctly over the water. Then, suddenly, the mist seemed to envelop the *Warwick,* and as it did so there fell upon my ears a thundering thrashing of flying canvas, and I saw her heel heavily over as she disappeared in the smudge.

"White squall," I yelled, and swung the boat's head around to face the wind. "Hold her steady, head to it," I cried, and at that moment a blast of wind rushed over the sea, pushing up the foam ahead of it like a wall of snow. We had just time to get the boat straightened out to meet it when it struck us.

A storm of flying water swept over us, but the men, bending all their weight to the oars, held the craft head to the wind, while with the rudder I gave what help I could. The *Countess of Warwick* had completely disappeared, and the rush of the wind and sea about us quickly blotted out everything save the ocean close alongside. It blew like the blast from a gun, whirling, whistling over us. Then in less than five minutes down came a deluge of water. The wind was over.

I felt a small hand grasp mine holding the tiller rope. Then I looked into the face of the girl, and her eyes met mine.

Ten minutes later the sun broke out from behind the bank with unabated vigour. The

Arrow lay a mile away with some of her lighter canvas hanging from the yards.

"I wonder what uncle will say," said Miss Waters.

"What he will say will be of small interest," I answered. "It is more important what he will do. However, let's hope there was little damage done and that he is still in good humour."

"I see now why he didn't think it any too safe," she said.

"It was the finest squall I ever saw," I answered, "and it has done more to make me thankful than anything that has happened to me for some years."

"Perhaps you will enjoy the pork just as much," she commented, but she let her gaze fall to the bottom of the boat and said no more until we were alongside.

CHAPTER XV.

In the windjammer, the tropical doldrums are usually the scene of more or less fun. The scupper holes are plugged and a tremendous downpour soon fills the main-deck a foot deep with clean fresh water. The decks of deep-loaded ships are often so much under water that seaweed grows upon them, and they are consequently apt to be clean after the growth is removed. The main-deck's hatches make a shallow amidships, and all across the broad width the water rolls with the heave of the ship. In the waterways it is often two feet deep.

In this huge tub the sailor takes his semi-annual bath. He does not bathe alone, neither does he overlook any of his belongings. Everything washable, from blankets to breeches, is laid out upon the white deck planks and rubbed with soap. After a foamy

lather is formed upon the large pieces, he will slide upon them like the small boy does upon ice, his feet gathering up a bow-wave of lather and dirt. Then the wash is dragged into deeper water for a rinsing.

At such times "skylarking," as it is called, is indulged in freely. The men chase each other about the deck, splashing water and whipping each other upon the naked skin with wet clothes. Sometimes a sailor would be initiated into untying a most complicated knot which some wag would tie in his trouser legs, while a shipmate engaged him in conversation. It is said that, if cleanliness is next to godliness, the sailor's soul is doomed, but this must surely be a fallacy, as no man can be very filthy who does not have to bathe but once or twice a year.

In the trade-winds' belts, where the wind is steady and sail is seldom handled from one day's end to another, many original kinds of amusements are indulged in upon ships whose masters stand for frolics. Checkers and squeaking fiddles, which are a part of all forecastle accessories, are laid aside, and

boxing taken up. There are never any gloves, and the test of skill invariably ends in a mix-up in which rules are superfluous and absurd. Dancing is common, and there are few sailors who cannot do a fair trick with the feet, if some one will produce a mouth-organ and play and "pat" for them.

We allowed the usual routine of this sort, and it did the men good, for they were a dirty set at best, much dirtier than American or English seamen. After a good shave all around they presented a passable appearance. Day after day the hot calm continued, and always at sunrise the sails of the English ship were upon the horizon. As we would head the same course to the Cape, this was not remarkable, but somehow the presence of the vessel worried me unaccountably.

Three days later, while it was still calm, we drifted close to her again and Crojack's comments upon her master's navigation brought forth a torrent of invective from both Garnett and Webster that would be impossible to equal.

It was now plainly evident the vessel we

were in company with was one of the English prison transports used for carrying convicts from England to the outlying colonies. The passengers aboard this one were to be transported for terms of years varying from five to that of an ordinary lifetime. They were, therefore, dangerous men, and had to be handled carefully. The armed guard of soldiers sent along to keep control were apparently numerous enough to handle them, but I knew well enough that a vessel of that kind should not have a fool for a commander.

"Why is it, Mr. Gore," Miss Waters said to me as I came aft, "that sailors are so brutal and rough?"

"Are they?" I asked.

"What do you think of the officers of that ship? Are they such as you would term gentlemen by any stretch of the imagination? I've read sea-tales, and all of them picture the American captains and mates as brutes. Don't you think it is so?" And she smiled wickedly.

"I think the man who writes or says all

the American or English officers are brutes is a bit prejudiced," I answered. "Whatever roughness they have in their natures, though, must certainly have gotten there while they were sailors before the mast. Take that Garnett, for instance. All the deviltry he knows — and he has learned something — he picked up while a sailor before the mast. I'm sorry, however, that you don't care for sailors." And I turned away. When I looked aft again, I saw Miss Waters had gone below and I deplored my temper and stupidity. Here I was trying, without doubt, to be civil and attentive to a young woman, and what a mess I made of it. I was a poor lover, though a strong one, and I reasoned that a weaker and less sensitive nature could give me long odds at the game. My solace was my pipe, and while I smoked I felt my spirits return, for the voyage would be a long one. We were only half-way and much might happen yet.

All day the vessels were within hailing distance, and at noontime we saw the guard of six soldiers — there were a dozen or more

on board — taking a gang of convicts out on the main-deck to give them air and exercise.

As darkness came on, a squall of rain, accompanied by a light air, drifted the *Arrow* a mile or more to the eastward. Then it fell calm again and the night was hot and sultry.

I was very nervous that evening. Something oppressed me, and I chafed at the seeming indifference Miss Waters had shown that day for the passion I had been unable to conceal.

On turning in I found it was impossible to sleep, and I lay awake in my bunk thinking thoughts concerning Brown that I afterward tried to forget.

O'Toole's step sounded loudly on the deck overhead, and the creaking of a brace sheave, when the slight swell made the ship roll, sounded loud and distinct.

It was four bells in the midwatch when I heard an exclamation from the second mate. At first I thought he was talking to the men in his watch, who usually lay, or

rather sat, in a group abaft the deck-house during the calm weather. With one on the t'gallant fo'castle as lookout and another at the wheel, there were ten men left with nothing to do but keep awake.

I was wide-awake when I heard the second mate's voice again. This time he appeared to hail some one at a distance. Thinking this strange, I listened intently.

Suddenly I heard a low, regular sound. There was no mistaking the noise; it was the regular, rocking sound made by oars in rowlocks, and the swing of the oars was quick.

A man hailed us at no great distance, but I couldn't make out what he said. Then the oar-strokes grew louder, and I raised myself on my elbow.

All of a sudden O'Toole roared, "All hands! Mr. Gore! Help!" and a rifle-shot rang out sharp and clear, followed by a terrific uproar alongside the ship.

I made a dive to the foot of my bunk and grasped a revolver that lay there on a small shelf. The next instant I burst through the

door of the forward cabin on to the main-deck.

In the darkness I heard O'Toole's oaths near the port side amidships. I had no idea what had happened, but through the gloom I made out a crowd of men struggling about an object which I rightly guessed to be the second mate's red head. Men's faces appeared by the score coming over the bulwarks, and I realized that we were being boarded.

Then I plunged into the crowd, bawling for the watch to lay aft and help.

The second mate was surrounded by a throng of strange men, and was laying about him with an iron belaying-pin, warding off thrusts from knives and cutlasses.

Before I could reach him a dozen or more set upon me and I backed away, firing chamber after chamber of my revolver at the men nearest to me.

I heard shouts from aft, and Crojack's hoarse voice from the companionway. Then there was rapid firing from all quarters at once.

Men swarmed over the t'gallant-rail and fired at our men crowding under the fo'-castle head.

A tall man in front of me flashed a pistol so close to my face that it almost blinded me and the powder burnt my cheek.

I took deliberate aim at him with my last cartridge and shot him dead. Then they closed in on all sides and bore me to the deck. I felt a knife point at my throat, but the next instant a hand dashed the blade aside and a powerful voice ordered that I be bound hand and foot.

Men crowded about me and upon me. In spite of my struggles, my empty revolver was wrenched from my grasp and a line quickly passed around my body, lashing my arms to my sides.

I saw O'Toole fighting like a demon. Twice a dozen or more men bore him by sheer weight to the deck. But he fought free, as a bulldog in a swarm of rats. Each time he went down, struggling fiercely, and instantly afterward arose, dragging the crowd of men to their feet along with him.

Cutlasses flashed, but there was no chance to use them in the crush. He struck out with both fists, the men clinging to him, and whether belaying-pin or knuckles landed, the man dropped who caught the blow.

It was inspiring to see the red-headed giant fling about him, and I found myself cheering him on.

"On, O'Toole, for ever!" I yelled, almost laughing as he knocked a man over, and he bawled out something in reply, at the same time struggling with renewed vigour.

It was too unequal a fight to last long. A tall man reached over his comrades' heads and dealt the second mate a heavy blow over the ear with a handspike, and that ended the fight as far as that officer was concerned.

The firing continued on the poop for a few moments longer. Then Crojack's hoarse cries ceased, and I knew what had happened aft.

A man came forward and gave an order in the deep, strong voice I had noticed before, and the next instant O'Toole and I were dragged aft along the deck and into the

cabin. There we were bundled into a heap with Captain Crojack and Brown, both of the latter being wounded.

The old skipper lay panting hard and, although I couldn't see what he had done on deck, I knew he had made a desperate fight for his ship.

We understood now what had happened, so there was little to be said. I found myself thinking of old Bill Garnett, and wondered if the convicts had killed him and the rest of the officers on his ship. Then the thought of the women on board our vessel flashed through my mind for the first time.

I looked at Crojack and was about to ask him a question, but he read the look in my eyes and turned away his face. I heard him give a deep groan. Then I knew what was to happen.

As the uproar died away forward, the men swarmed into the cabin, and for the first time, by the aid of the cabin lamp, we had an opportunity to get a good look at the convicts' faces.

All of them were pale from the effects of

long confinement, but their bristling, uncombed hair and beards gave them a fierce appearance. Many of them were blear-eyed and unsteady on their feet from the effects of the rum they had captured.

They had taken their vessel, as we learned by their talk, shortly before midnight. They had planned the affair carefully and had risen in a body, overpowering the guard by sheer force of numbers. After this they had taken their arms, and, after a desperate fight with the crew and after-guard, they were in possession of the ship.

All of them appeared to be rough men, except the man whose powerful and commanding voice I had heard above the general uproar. He was followed everywhere by a few who kept close at either hand, and the way he roared out orders told plainly that he was the leader.

He was a tall, fine-looking young man, and his powerful frame showed in marked contrast to the rest. But it was his face that appeared most different from those of his followers. Every line in it spoke the

leader, and every feature, from the fierce, bright eyes to the square, heavy jaw, spoke the man of indomitable spirit and sudden action.

When I first had a good look at him I could hardly believe such a fine-looking man could be a great villain. It was easy to gather from the remarks of his companions, however, that his appearance belied him, and that even the worst of them stood in awe of his passions. Afterward, when I had learned his history, I realized the enormous power for evil that this man was capable of and the great influence he held over nearly all with whom he came in contact.

It was he who had planned the uprising and had taken advantage of the calm weather when he was allowed on deck to communicate with his fellows.

As he entered the cabin where we lay, the men who were ransacking some of the skipper's lockers desisted, and their shouting and swearing moderated a little. He forced his way through the crowd without noticing any one and strode up to where we lay. He

stopped and gazed at us a few moments, and then, speaking in a low tone to a couple of the ruffians who followed at his heels, he started up the companionway.

The two men spoken to remained behind and sat on the transom near us, holding away from the rest of their fellows and evidently watching us closely, although we were all four fairly wrapped in coils of rope.

I turned my head to see where the leader had gone, and as I saw his head pass the opening of the hatch I noticed his face was reflecting a ruddy glare of light.

A loud exclamation from Brown, who lay staring up through the skylight, made me turn my eyes in the direction he was looking and I saw the lurid glare reflected on the hoisted spanker.

Crojack tried to turn, but was too weak. "It's the *Countess of Warwick,*" he gasped, "and these devils intend to stay aboard of us. Is O'Toole dead?" and he tried to look into the face of his second mate.

"He made a great fight," I answered, "but he got a clip on the head from a hand-

spike. What did these fellows fire their ship for?"

"Just to take this one so no one will recognize them," answered the old man.

"And us?" asked Brown, "what will they do with us?"

"We'll have to go the way Garnett went, I guess," gasped Crojack, "though I wouldn't mind it so much if it wasn't for those poor women. Mrs. Waters got a bullet meant for me. She won't live till morning. Shot through the breast—"

"But Miss Waters?" I managed to get out in a whisper.

"Locked in my stateroom and that tall devil has the key."

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT my thoughts were when I realized the position of the woman I loved I can hardly remember.

I am a plain sailor-man, and, perhaps, a rough one. But I believe my skin is no thicker than most men's.

Now, when I look back on that time and remember what I went through, I try to think if it would have been any better for the people who look down on me, or if I would have been a better man had I acted differently.

I'm not a man to cry out against the rulings of a fate I've fought against with all my power. If I'm looked down upon as an untrustworthy man, I'm willing to take my rating accordingly. I know I'm shunned and called a pirate by some, but I still feel as if I did about what might have been ex-

pected from one in my position and condition, and that I was as near right as possible.

I know, also, that Brown acted from as good an impulse as I did, although it may not have been the same. Had old Captain Crojack lived he would have made it plainer to landsmen why we stood together in the part we played. But I don't mean to say that the honest old fellow would have joined us.

As it was, before eight bells in the morning Captain Crojack was stark and stiff, lying dead where they had left him on the cabin floor. He had received several wounds after Mrs. Waters was shot, while she was clinging to him.

Not a word of complaint about himself had passed his lips. He died the man he had lived, and the deep-water fleet lost one of the best and bravest men that ever trod a quarter-deck.

At eight bells this convict, Benson, who now had command of the ship with a hundred and more men for her desperate crew, came into the after cabin.

There were only the two men left to watch us in there of this gang, and he glanced quickly at them and then at us.

Then he took a key from his pocket, opened the door of the captain's stateroom, and entered there alone.

In a few moments I heard a piteous cry, followed by the noise of a slight scuffle. Then all was quiet. Something seemed to swell within me as if my whole life or spirit was striving to burst forth from my lashed body. I remember that I suddenly found myself with my mouth open, gasping for breath. Then I strained every nerve and sinew to start my lashings. I saw nothing, but felt a strand of rope give slightly. Steadily I kept the strain until it seemed as if I was losing consciousness. Then I felt the rope part across my chest and I forced one arm free. The next instant the two men were upon me.

They were powerful men. I struggled and fought fiercely in the vain effort to free myself, but the coils wrapped me closely from my shoulders to my ankles. I bent and

doubled and struck out savagely with my free arm. But it was no use.

They pinned me down and soon had another turn around my arm and I lay helpless. One of the villains, however, got his hand too near my mouth and I cut the thumb from it with my teeth as clean as if done with a knife. Then something crashed upon my head and a great flame burned before my eyes. The struggle was over.

When I regained consciousness from the blow, an hour or two afterward, the blood was running from my nose and mouth in a thin stream. A hurricane roared in my ears, but I could see objects distinctly. The red fluid ran down the deck seams and trickled on to O'Toole's cheek, rousing him as it became cold. I remember watching it with a feeling of indifference, except that I hoped it would continue to run.

Benson came out of the stateroom and stood languidly resting his elbow against the bulkhead. His face wore a devilish smile and his dark eyes looked straight and steadily into mine. His shirt was open at the

front and I recall the smooth white skin of his neck. I watched him closely and hoped he would come near enough to me. If he had, bound and lashed as I was, I should have killed him with my teeth. I was breathing hard, but otherwise I was cool and collected. "You are the mate," said the convict leader in a low, even tone, still looking me in the eye and smiling.

O'Toole moved his head slightly and I saw that he was aware of what the man was saying.

"I'll give you three men the choice of joining or leaving," went on Benson. "You will have to navigate the ship to where we want to go. What is it, stay or leave?"

"Me friend," said O'Toole in a strained voice, "ye cannot expect me ter spake with th' rope a-cuttin' through me. I can't think av th' proposition till ye'll loosen a few turns av th' gaskets about me wind."

Whether it was my desire to live in order to revenge myself upon this felon, Benson, or whether it was the thought of staying and doing what I could for the girl, that swayed

me most, I leave people to judge for themselves. I will admit that these two ideas were the only ones in my head at the time, but I cannot honestly recall which of them governed me the most. I know that I never wished to live, before or since, with the desire that came upon me at that moment.

Thoughts come rapidly to a man used to emergencies, and I made up my mind what to do before O'Toole had ceased speaking.

I saw the light in Benson's eyes when he turned his gaze toward the second mate. Although the matted beard he wore partly covered the smiling movement of the convict's mouth, I felt that he had passed sentence on O'Toole at that glance. He remained perfectly quiet, however, and awaited my answer. I know that some people have said that men, such as Crojack, O'Toole, and myself, ought to have given better account of ourselves in a fight where we knew it was almost certain death to be beaten. But we were not story-book heroes. We were just plain sailor-men.

There were only three convicts killed in

the fight and four wounded. Three of these latter had the unmistakable marks of the second mate's belaying-pin on their heads.

With the exception of the big-shouldered German sailor in my watch, the men had offered no resistance whatever. This one man had made some show of resistance when cornered under the t'gallant fo'castle, but he was quickly overpowered.

O'Toole and myself were strong men, but what did that count for in such a crowd. Crojack and Brown had defended the quarter-deck until they were shot down and overpowered. They were but two against fifty.

I knew that every man of our crew who would not join would walk the plank long before daylight.

There had been no unnecessary noise about it. The deep, sullen murmur of angry voices forward, followed by splashes alongside, told plainer than words what Benson meant to do with us unless we joined him in his crime.

I knew, also, that he would not suspect the feeling I bore toward his poor victim

left in the captain's cabin, and if I stayed, I might watch for my chance for either rescue or revenge. Even if rescue were out of the question, I felt that nothing could save the villain's life, should I once again be free.

Therefore, I looked him straight in the eyes and answered:

"I promise to join you for good or bad. Turn me loose and give your orders."

"And you?" he said, quietly, addressing Brown.

"I'll follow Mr. Gore in anything," he answered.

O'Toole gasped, struggled, and half-rose in a sitting posture, crying out:

"My God! Mr. Gore! Mr. Gore! What have ye done? What have ye done?"

Benson opened the door in the bulkhead which separated the fore and after cabins, and instantly three men, who appeared to be his chief followers, entered and cut my lashings and cast me adrift to my ankles. These fellows had evidently been listening and waiting for this.

Then they handed me a sheet of paper and placed pen and ink on the cabin table. I was requested to write that agreement with Benson that stated I joined him of my own free will. This paper was used against me at the trial to prove my piracy. I wrote it and signed it without being threatened in any way.

After that my ankles were freed and Brown was cast loose. He was bleeding slightly from a bullet-hole through his leg, and could scarcely stand from weakness caused by the loss of blood, which had continued for hours.

He was given the paper and pen and he wrote as I had already written.

O'Toole was loosened as far up as his waist and allowed to stand. He avoided our looks, and stood with his gaze bent on a seam in the planking beneath his feet.

His great red head bore a gash above his ear, and the clotted blood made a sickening spectacle. But his spirit was neither bent nor broken.

"'Twould have been better if we was all

killed in th' scuffle," he said, in a deep, sad voice. It may have been the roaring in my head from the blow I received, but there was something in his tone that made me think of the low, deep murmur of the sea on a quiet night.

"I've lived too long already, but if I'd lived t' be a hundred I'd never expected to see a thing like that," and he looked at the paper on the table. "I'll take the walk on nothin', me friend, for there ain't no power you've got can make a damned, dirty convict av th' second mate av this ship."

At that moment I felt meaner than I would care to own, and I noticed that Brown was busy bandaging his wounded leg. A sudden feeling of shame came over me, and, for an instant, I glanced around the cabin for a weapon to make a last rally. Then my eye fell upon that stateroom door, and I remembered.

Men crowded suddenly through the door of the forward cabin, and O'Toole was led out to his doom.

As I saw him hold his head up, and a

hard, determined look settle over his seamed and lined face when he turned away, my voice came back to me, and I called loudly for my captain.

I had learned the villain's name before this. He had no intention of leaving Brown and myself alone in the cabin, so he turned at my hail and stood in the doorway.

"Give him a chance," I said. "Don't do that!" and I pointed forward.

The scoundrel raised his eyebrows and drew a revolver from his belt. He slowly cocked the weapon, while men crowded up on either side.

"If you murder him, I'll stand by him," I said, and I began to measure my distance. "You may set him adrift and let him take his chance."

He was no fool, this Benson, and saw that if he killed us both there would be no one aboard he could depend on to navigate the ship. A vessel adrift is an awkward thing, especially if she is overcrowded with desperate men.

He held his pistol lower and I saw that he was hesitating, so I took my advantage.

"Put him in one of the small boats with grub and water and give him a chance for his life. He don't know where we are going, and can do no harm even if he is picked up," I argued.

The pistol went down to his hip.

"I give orders aboard this ship," he said, "and don't let me hear from you again. Come on deck and show me what the men would like to do. If it's convenient I may have it done. You are one of us and have a right to ask questions; but don't let me hear any orders."

Some of the men appeared disappointed at the ending of the affair, and I fancy most of them would have been better pleased if their leader had shot me. One heavy-set, short ruffian, who stood at Benson's side, glared savagely at me as I went on deck.

I looked about me for a sign of a ship, but there was nothing in sight. We were drifting ahead before a light air, so I

couldn't tell whether the *Countess of Warwick* had burned and foundered or been left astern.

The deck about me was crowded with men. I looked to see if there was any trace of the scuffle, and I saw several dark smears on the white planking that told of either the second mate's belaying-pin or my revolver.

On the starboard hand, amidships, was a heavy plank run out over the topgallant rail, about two fathoms beyond the vessel's side. Its inner end was lashed fast and a crowd of men with pale faces and rough beards stood near it. That big-shouldered German, who had fought like a man, was being led toward it. Behind him came O'Toole. They were the last to go. Benson meant to leave but little to chance and he intended to leave no witnesses to hang him. I've no doubt that he meant to get rid of me in the same manner, after he had used me to take him where he intended to go.

The German sailor halted at the inner

end of the plank. His arms were lashed fast to his sides, but his legs were free.

He was lifted or pushed up the steps set against the rail and then he stood on the plank's end.

"Walk!" came the hoarse order from a lean scoundrel.

The German hesitated and the command was followed by a thrust from a boarding cutlass.

Instead of walking to the end, he turned quickly. The convict's face was within a couple of feet of the plank.

He looked down on the villain coolly while he measured the distance with his eye. Then he kicked out so fully that the convict dropped as if shot. Both of his eyes were ruined and he never could see well enough afterward to get about the deck alone.

Then the sailor walked slowly out over the side, while several convicts aimed their pistols at him. As he reached the farthest end of the plank he started to turn around. Several reports cracked out, and I saw him

sway from the bullet-strokes. Then he fell with a splash and was gone.

O'Toole was led up next. His face was hard set and he walked with a firm step. He reached the steps at the rail and a crowd of men started to push him up.

"Bring him aft!" roared Benson, and the men hesitated.

The leader's hand went to his belt, but he did not repeat the order.

His short henchman, who had stuck to his side, plunged his heavy-set body into the crowd and reached those nearest the second mate. Three more of the leaders then helped clear the way, while Benson stood there with his pistol out. The arms the convict ship had carried to control her cargo were the principal cause of her loss. A revolver, backed by a man like Benson, was an affair of authority that few men would care to dispute.

O'Toole was led aft to the quarter-deck.

"Bring a boat alongside," ordered Benson.

Several boats were towing astern, where

"GAZING SILENTLY AFTER US, ADRIFT AND ALONE."

they had been dropped by the convicts after they had gained the deck.

One of these, a double-ended craft, was hauled alongside.

There was a breaker of water in the stern-sheets, and several oars lay upon the thwarts. A man was sent below and presently he came back with a bag of ship's biscuit which he tossed over the side into the boat. O'Toole's lashings were cast adrift as he stood in the mizzen channels, and he was shoved into her. A man let go the painter, forward, and, before the second mate could turn around, he was adrift and going slowly astern.

I watched him as he stood there in the sunlight, while the breeze, which just ruffled the ocean, made long, dark streaks in the water around his boat. I thought of his past and what a fine mate he had been. Rough man as he was, he appeared grand to me, standing there gazing silently after us, adrift and alone.

The ruffians crowded to the rail and hailed him with jeers and curses.

He remained silent and motionless, with his arms folded and his head bowed slightly forward, until he drifted slowly out of sight.

I tried to bid him farewell, but the words stuck in my throat.

Benson's voice sounded behind me, and I turned.

The breeze had increased, and I was ordered to lay a course to the southward. After a good deal of bungling I finally had the ship braced sharp up to the southeast trade, which we were now beginning to feel, and when I had a chance to look about me again there was nothing in sight astern save the blue sea and sky.

CHAPTER XVII.

I AM not going to dwell too long on that cruise under Benson and describe its horrible details; there are enough hard things in the future, without going back into the past. Any one who has a morbid taste for listening to tales of deviltry will have to get someone else to go into the minor incidents of that strange voyage.

As to that convict Benson, I will say that the excesses and mutinies that he overcame and put down with an iron hand showed the power of the man's character. Had he been a man of principle, a better one never lived to command a ship. Authority was in every tone of his voice and every motion of his hand; but he was a villain and his ship was a floating hell.

When we headed away to the s'uth'ard he had a ship and crew capable of keeping the

seas for a couple of months at the least, and the men were ready for any known or unknown crime. Ten of our men had joined.

Benson was not very communicative, but I gathered from his remarks that he had been pretty nearly everything that was bad and very little of anything that was good. He certainly appeared well informed on all subjects. I learned from the men that he was but little over thirty years old and that he had a life sentence against him. Afterward I found out that it was for a desperate attempt upon a Dublin bank, where two officers were killed on surprising the gang of burglars at work.

There were all kinds of wild stories told about him among the men, and, although they were perhaps greatly exaggerated, he certainly appeared equal to any occasion where coolness and nerve were to be depended on.

He gave me orders to head the ship for the coast of Patagonia and drive her to the southward with all possible speed.

The plan that he and his closest followers

had worked out was to make a landing on this wild coast and then divide into bands. After doing this they would separate and each band would work out its own salvation.

They had, apparently, nothing to fear from the *Countess of Warwick*. She had been set on fire, with the survivors of her crew on board, bound securely hand and foot. Then the convicts had taken to the boats with the fixed intention of capturing the *Arrow* and sailing away as peaceable Yankee merchantmen. So far their plans had worked out well.

Six Swedes, two dagos, the cook, and steward, from the crew of the *Arrow,* joined the gang. The rest of our men were forced to go overboard, three alive and the others killed in the fracas when the mutineers came over the side. Gus, a big Swede, who had been in my watch, spoke to me the first night afterward while I stood at the edge of the poop. He was coiling down the foretopsail brace, and the crowd of convicts who had tailed on left him alone to do the work.

"I had to join, Mr. Gore," said he in a whisper, "but if there's a way out let me know, den. I go wid you. A man only lives once. I radder be a live pirate dan a dead admiral, but if dere's a chance, I go wid you an' take de chance."

"Is there any other man who will stand by us?" I asked.

"Aye tank dere's de cook. He fight if dere's a show."

"He's enough. Let him speak with me the first chance he gets," I said.

Benson saw we were close together and probably talking, so he came up.

"I say, Gore," said he, "this is a fine night for a run. How much do we do an hour?"

"About seven and a half knots," I answered.

"Will this wind hold for a long time, long enough for us to make a good many miles toward Patagonia?"

I said I thought it was the trade and would hold for a couple of weeks, when

we might expect to run out of it in the latitude of the River Plate.

"Well, Gore," said he, "you seem to be a capable sort of fellow, and I like you. It isn't every man I like, now I tell you. If you do the square thing and get us to the southward of the river, not too far, but far enough so we can make a good get-away from the ship, I'll not forget you."

"I appreciate my position thoroughly," I answered, "and also your commendation, but what's to become of me when we get down to where you want to leave the ship? Do I get a fair show on the beach, or am I expected to stick to the vessel?"

"Well, you will go with me, if you do the right thing. I'm a square man to deal with."

I have always been suspicious of the man who proclaims his honesty to the world. I never knew a really honest man to say he was square. But this fellow's tone and manner was so like that of many a shipping merchant I had had dealings with, I almost laughed.

Benson saw the glimmer of my smile in the moonlight and evidently thought me pleased with the prospect, for his tone was even more conciliating as he went on.

"If there's anything of value in the ship, of value which can be turned into ready money, understand, let me know about it," he went on. "We will go halves on whatever you can turn to account. There don't seem to be much that we could take ashore with us except the nautical instruments, and I suppose they would excite suspicion if we tried to sell them."

"We might bond the ship," I said, "by taking her into Buenos Ayres, and then make a quick get-away to the southward. If you are a good hand at forgery you might get out some kind of papers that would pass at the custom house long enough for us to get the money and clear out."

"No, there's too many of us. The rest could not be kept under long enough for any such deal. You see that we don't get too close to the river. We must take our chances with the little we have."

"Do you mean to sink her?" I asked.

"No, burn her," he said, "and do you think it would be best for all of this crowd to get ashore at once?"

I saw his hideous meaning. The fellow was making it pretty clear that I was never to get ashore at all. There was every prospect of the large majority of the convicts remaining aboard, for Benson certainly never meant that half a hundred men should be turned loose upon South America to tell of their happenings. Just how he intended to dispose of the mass was the question.

"We have six boats," I said, "and they will hold every one aboard easily, if the weather isn't too rough."

"A ship will always sink after she is burned, don't you think?" he asked.

"Yes, if she is burned deep enough," I answered.

"Well, she will be burned deep enough and the weather will be very rough. We will need all the boats to carry what stuff we can pick up."

"What do you mean to pick up?" I asked.

"Now, I say, Gore, you must know that men can't live without money. The first sail we sight you will report to me. It's probable that all vessels going this way carry something of value, isn't it?"

I said I thought it was.

"Well, then, we must take what we can get and not take too much trouble asking about the ownership. You get your share, you see, and I expect you to give a good account of yourself in a fracas. You're a stocky built fellow and put up a good fight the day we took you. Now you must show what you can do taking the other fellow in turn."

"I see," I said, "I reckon I'll do my share."

"If it wasn't for the risk, I would like to keep cruising along indefinitely," said Benson. "Life is very pleasant aboard a fine ship, especially when one has a wife and good crew."

I would have jumped him then and

there if Johnson had not come up at the moment. I turned my face to windward and gazed out over the ocean sparkling in the moonlight, and wondered how I managed to control myself. The grim horror of the ship passing along over that sparkling sea like some great black spectre in the night was almost unbearable. Like a great, black, ghostly shadow she slid along over the smooth sea, not a light burning aboard her and her crew of villains resting easily in the warm air. I tried to keep my thoughts from Benson and his deviltries, and wondered if there really were an intelligent power governing the universe, and if so, why these things could happen. And yet I knew they were happening elsewhere continually and it was the part of man to bear them as best he might.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I DRILLED enough active men aside from the men of the *Arrow,* and divided them into watches for a crew; so I managed to keep canvas on the ship and get about all there was out of her in regard to speed. The weather was perfect, and there was no call to do much else than steer and tend the braces. A few of the convicts had been to sea before, and these I used for work aloft. As soon as Brown's leg was well enough to allow him to stand on deck he relieved me as far as attending to the steering.

I worked out the ship's position every day at noon, and Benson would pick it off carefully on a chart pinned to the cabin table. But we were never alone together a moment. The four men who acted as Benson's lieutenants were always at hand, and the heavy-set short villain, Johnson, was always on deck when his master was below.

Brown and I seldom had a chance to speak to each other. A score of eyes were upon us all the time when we were on deck, on the lookout for any act of treachery. I could see by Brown's look of inquiry that he was trusting to my knowledge of seamanship to get us out of the difficulty. Once he came near me and asked: "What's the chance?" But that heavy-set devil, Johnson, saw him speak to me, though he couldn't hear what was said, and he came up to us with a string of oaths and ordered Brown forward.

I don't think I slept more than a few hours during the first days of that cruise. At times my blood would rush to my head and I would find that I could stand it no longer. A dozen times I started up from my bunk and made ready for the end. I had no weapon except a sailor's sheath-knife, but I knew that if I once could get within reach of Benson nothing could save his life. But I knew that if I killed him it would leave the girl to the mercy of the common crowd. This thought would make me so weak at times that the sweat would

run down my face and neck, and I would get so dizzy that I could scarcely stand. I was as near being crazy as a sane man could possibly get.

Every idea as to wrecking the ship, should it come on to blow, I worked and studied over. As to running the vessel off her course by false reckoning, I had to give that over as absolutely useless. Benson was not a man one could deceive easily, and he knew a compass as well as I did. I might get a hundred miles out in a week or two, without his seeing the error, but a hundred miles one way or the other would not count for anything in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean. We could get no nearer help in that way.

There was nothing to do but carry on and trust in Providence that we would be overhauled on suspicion, though there was but little hope of this happening on an American merchantman. I tried to calculate O'Toole's chances of being picked up. All alone in the middle of the ocean, and under an equatorial sun. I knew there was but

little hope for him. And even if he should be picked up he would not be able to give the slightest clue to our whereabouts or destination.

Studying and planning all sorts of desperate schemes I passed the first week. Then I determined to put off action until a favourable moment.

The weather remained fair and the lumpy little trade clouds flew merrily past our skysail trucks.

Benson took care that Miss Waters did not appear on deck often, for the temper of the men was not such that he could trust them. More than once there were mutterings concerning the life aft.

I dreaded this very much, for if the men once took charge, the horror of the conditions would be more than bearable. It would mean that both Brown and myself would be forced to go out in a futile fight against odds which could not be overcome.

One evening I managed to get near the cook without being noticed. The moke gave me a look and I spoke.

"Is there any way you can thin the crowd down?" I asked.

"What yo' mean, sir?" he answered, with a grin.

"You know," I said. "Hasn't Gus spoken to you?"

"Yaassir, dat he has."

"There's rat-poison by the box in the fore-hold," I said.

It was a wild and grotesque idea, but it shows the straits we were put to when we even considered such a thing. It would not do to have anything happen to Benson or his mate Johnson until the men forward were thinned out. Further consideration of the scheme showed its futility, for it would be impossible to carry out anything so destructive, owing to the different watches and messes. I was sorry I had spoken, for it put an idea into the moke's head which well-nigh proved fatal to all.

One day shortly afterward the men complained of their food and took occasion to flog the cook for not providing better.

The poor fellow was haled to the main

rigging and his hands made fast to the sheer-pole, his feet just clearing the deck. Then every man of the complaining crowd took a few whacks at his bare back with a stiff piece of ratline stuff. He made no outcry, but fell fainting to the deck when cut down. When he came around again I saw the white of his eye and noticed the peculiar gleam, which boded no good for some one.

Two days later we passed the Argentine steamer, from Buenos Ayres to Liverpool. She was one of those new screw vessels, and the absence of the big side paddle-boxes made her look very shipshape. She was going along about ten knots and her decks were crowded with passengers. Now and then a white dress fluttered in the breeze.

As we drew near Benson came to me.

"How fast do we go, Mr. Gore?" said he.

The *Arrow* was heeling down and tearing along steadily now under everything we could put on her, for the trade was

steady and held perfectly fair at east-south-east.

"I believe we are going a bit faster than the steamer," I ventured.

An ugly gleam lit up his dark eyes. I saw what he meant before he spoke, for he was most ignorant of seamanship and all things concerning a vessel.

"If you can catch her, lay us up alongside," he said, "for we have particular business aboard her." And he called to Johnson and some others who were standing aft.

I tried to explain that although we were going much faster than the steamer it would be absolutely impossible to board her, but he could not or would not see it.

"We can only go one way," I said, "and to try to catch him would simply make us absurd. He would only have to head up into the wind and we would come aback all standing, stopping dead. Then he would only have to get a mile or so to windward and come down upon us. We could not

possibly get out of his way in time and he could run us down easily."

As it was certain the steamer would not stop for us, the affair would only have a bad ending, perhaps complicating matters still more. For that reason I was not over-keen to do anything foolish. The steamer drew up so quickly on our weather beam that Benson was forced to give up any idea of trying his villainy upon her. It showed plainly, however, that he would stop any sailing ship he might see, and there was much to be hoped from this. My evident desire not to board a ship would be of good stead to me when the right time came. I could use it to advantage. There would be vessels in sight soon now, for we were nearing the latitude of the river at a ten-knot rate.

It was while the men were all engrossed watching the liner that the cook took the opportunity for revenge. He had managed to get below and procure enough rat-poison to kill a dozen ship's companies. This he

mixed with the dinner for all hands, sparing none.

One of the men who started to eat noticed the taste and called attention to it while the rest waited suspiciously, remembering the affair of the flogging. Soon the fellow was nauseated and the men broke forth in a fury.

The moke was haled forward. Gus, who had been seen talking to him, was also brought up. Then they were told to eat, and some of the mess food was placed before them. There were cries for Brown and myself and a gang of rascals came tumbling aft for us.

Benson met them at the edge of the poop with his revolver drawn, and Johnson came up behind him with a double-barrelled gun. A tall fellow who was in Benson's confidence stood near the after companionway and laid two pistols upon the deck within reach of both his hands.

"What do you want?" asked Benson, sharply.

"We want the mate and the young fellow," said the spokesman of the gang, and the rest took up the cry.

"'WHEN I WANT YOU MEN TO COME AFT HERE TO HELP ME, I'LL SEND FOR YOU.'"

"Who will run this ship, then?" asked the leader, levelling his pistol at the man starting up the ladder to the poop. He spoke in a low, deep voice, but so distinctly that the fellow hesitated.

"I'm running this vessel," said Benson, "and when I want you men to come aft here to help me I'll send for you. You'd hang the whole crowd of us if you had your way. Go back forward and if the grub is no good make the cook eat it — and then pick your own cook. Go back."

But the men were angry and hesitated.

"Do you think Mr. Gore would try to poison you, you fools?" he continued. "What good would that do him? Can he run the ship alone?"

Brown, who had turned in, having relieved me during the last watch, heard the rumpus and came on deck through the forward door of the cabin house. The men were standing there and surrounded him at once. It looked as though he would be roughly handled.

Benson saw that some quick action must

be made at once. He thrust his pistol in his belt and made a flying leap from the break of the poop, landing upon the heads of the men who had gripped the third mate. With immense power he swung them first this way and then that as the bunch rolled upon the deck. Then dragging two of them to their feet along with him, he shook them and shoved them forward. Johnson stood motionless with his gun ready and Brown climbed the ladder to the poop. In a moment Benson came back. "You see, Gore, what a mess a man can make of things," he said, coolly. "I know you had nothing to do with the cook, or I'd make you eat some of the grub. Better go aft out of the way."

It was good advice, and Brown followed me to the taffrail.

"It's a pity," I whispered, "that the moke didn't use better judgment. If he had given a little less we might have had a chance."

"It has given Benson an idea at any rate," said Brown. "You can look out for

a pain in the stomach when we sight the land."

A man was detailed from the crowd of convicts to do the cooking afterward, and others watched him and took turns cleaning up. The moke and Gus disappeared. We never saw them again.

CHAPTER XIX.

As long as the trade-wind lasted I managed to run the ship well enough with Brown's help, for there was seldom much to do in the way of handling canvas, but as we neared the zone of variables things took a different turn. The third mate was not enough of a sailor to take advantage of the slants, and the heavy weather of the pampero was approaching. It made it necessary for me to be on deck most of the time, and even then I could not save some of the lighter canvas which was caught in a squall. The strain was hard, but Benson, who kept strict watch with his mate, Johnson, called me at any sudden change and spared me not at all.

One morning it fell dead calm. The sun shone through a sort of haze and the day was cool. We had made thirty-three

degrees of southing and were about four hundred miles off the Plate. The swell ran smoothly, but even through its oily surface one could see the swirls of the current from the great river. They formed tide rips which ridged the ocean for a space and then disappeared only to form again when a mass of water would force its way to the surface. The sea had lost its blue colour and it was dull. About eleven o'clock in the morning the sun broke through the haze and shone strongly. There was absolutely no wind and we lay drifting all around the compass. Suddenly, from a great distance, came the deep roll of thunder. The sky was now absolutely cloudless and the rolling crashes following each other at close intervals made an uncanny sound. Not a tip of cloud bank rose above the horizon, and the men about the deck gazed in some astonishment at the noise.

I knew it well, and knew it was the pampero from the River Plate. We would get a touch of it during the night and then

things would be somewhat mixed aboard the *Arrow*.

It started to breeze up gently from the westward about sundown, but not a cloud rose above the horizon. By nine o'clock that night it grew very dark. The blackness was most impenetrable. The wind came sighing over the smooth sea, and I began to strip the ship for the fracas.

We carried no running lights, as Benson didn't care to be seen at night, although, for that matter, he would have been much safer than in the daytime. His ideas upon nautical subjects were at a variance with my own, but I made no comment. We carried a light in the binnacle in order to steer. Besides this single lamp there was never a light allowed aboard the ship except in the captain's cabin.

I was very tired that evening, but stayed upon the poop watching the west on the lookout for the first signs of a squall. About ten o'clock there was sharp lightning to starboard. We were heading almost due south and our yards were sharp on the

starboard tack. Suddenly the blackness grew denser to windward. A deep murmuring came over the inky sea. Then a puff of wind smote sharply.

"Hard up, hard up that wheel," I bawled, as the thrashing of the weather leech of the maintopsail warned me. Brown sprang to the wheel and with the man already there rolled it hard up. Then with a rush and droning roar through the rigging the pampero struck us.

Luckily, we had steering-way, for if she had not answered her helm on the instant, the *Arrow* would have been taken flat aback and dismasted, which would have meant a terrible ending for the desperate rascals. A dismasted ship in mid-ocean is usually a lost ship. The horrors of a boat cruise in overloaded small craft in that latitude meant the worst that could happen to the seafarer.

With a heel to leeward that brought the water well up on her deck, the *Arrow* paid off before the gale and tore her way through a sea which now shone ghastly and white

with the phosphorescent foam. I looked aloft and saw that every yard-arm and truck held a ball of fire. The bellying lower topsails of the heaviest double nought canvas strained away like the wings of some giant bird in the night overhead. The roar of the wind rushing through the standing rigging and pouring out under the foot of the canvas made the cries of the men sound faint and distant, those on the yard-arms rolling up the lighter canvas bawling to those on deck in strained and frantic tones. None of the convicts had seen such weather before and the flare of the St. Elmo fires lent a ghastliness to the scene that might have made a sailor's heart beat quicker. A man came close to me on the poop muttering curses and prayers and feeling about for something he probably did not want. A bright flash of lightning lit the scene, and I saw a crowd of men on the main-deck forward, huddled under the port side of the forward house. They seemed absolutely panic-stricken. However, we had some sailor-men aboard, and they worked man-

fully getting gaskets upon the yards and the gear cleared up after a fashion. Then I managed to get the yards squared and ran the ship dead before the blast, leaving a wake flashing and whitening a full hundred feet on either side.

A flash of lightning showed Benson standing near the break of the poop. He was straining his eyes to windward and holding on to a line, but he appeared little concerned. Close by, leaning against the mizzen with his arms folded and pipe stuck rakishly in his mouth, was Johnson. Whatever the two ruffians felt, I knew that fear found no place in their hearts. They were trusting me to see them safely through, and all the time, whether they knew it or not, the thought of the girl below in the scoundrel's stateroom was the only thing that kept me from sending them to hell. A sudden swing into the wind and a couple of cast off braces, and the fate of the villains would be as certain as death and suffering itself. Yet, there they stood, trusting me. I never could understand it, and I thought upon it

for some time that night in the black rush of the pampero. The futility of their struggles, the absolute hopelessness of their case, were all plain before me, but they were unconcerned.

Benson was a fatalist of the most pronounced type. He dealt only and simply with the present. The past was irrevocably dead, blotted out. The future was a mystery, absolute and unyielding to even the subtlest mind. He dealt with what matter he had in hand nor worried himself the least with that he held in no control.

On and on into the blackness ahead we tore at the rate of fifteen knots an hour with the wind upon our starboard taffrail. No one went on lookout, although I ordered a man to do so. Whoever went forward was probably swallowed in the crowd of frightened convicts, or took advantage of the panic to turn in and get some much needed rest. I knew we were entering the zone of commerce and would probably sight some vessel soon, and the thought of tearing away into the night at the wild rate

we were going without a light made me strain every nerve for something ahead.

It was about midnight that I thought I saw a light ahead. I called Benson and asked him to look, for my eyes were raw from the salt spume and want of rest. The fellow saw nothing, and we stood together gazing into the blackness beyond the jib-boom end. Then I suddenly made out a green light close aboard and to port, and I knew we were upon a vessel hove to in the storm.

We had been running with the wind drawing more and more upon the starboard quarter and I saw that it would not do to luff any further and cross the stranger's bow. Besides, he might be going ahead some in spite of the sea which was now running heavily. There was not a second to lose, and I sprang to the wheel and rolled it up to pass his stern. Almost before the lubber's mark began to shift, the green light disappeared and the blackness ahead took form. Right in front of us lay an immense ship

wallowing along under short canvas and not fifty fathoms distant.

Not a word had come from forward. Not a soul had seen her. Before any one on the main-deck knew of her whereabouts we were grinding along her stern, our yard-arms hooking into the vang of her spanker-gaff and tearing that spar out of her while our mainbrace bumkin tore away a piece of her taffrail. Hoarse yells came from her quarter-deck, and I heard distinctly a deep voice asking, "What ship is that?" but we went rushing onward without a word and disappeared. It was a close call. Benson turned his face toward me and I tried to catch the look of his eye, but it was too dark.

"I reckon we'll not hit anything more to-night," I said. "I'm about tired out and will leave Brown on deck to call me if there is any change."

"All right," he answered, coolly.

And I went below.

CHAPTER XX.

ON reaching the forward cabin, I turned to the table to see if there happened to be a bite of anything to eat upon it. There always had been in days past. In the darkness I could not tell, and I opened the door leading aft to see if I could get a little light from the captain's room. The creaking of the straining bulkheads blended with the noise from the deck and in the semi-darkness made by Benson's lamplight streaming through a door well aft, I seemed to hear the voices of the murdered as the shadows moved upon the deck. A figure flitted past me toward the door on the other side, and for a moment I believed I saw a ghost. The next instant I sprang across the deck and seized it.

"Let me go, Mr. Gore. Don't stop me," said Miss Waters.

"Good God, are you still alive?" I asked, more for something to say than anything else.

She raised her hand to her head and leaned against the bulkhead, sobbing.

"Yes, I'm alive," she said, controlling herself, "I was not taught the trade of murder."

"I didn't mean that," I said, hastily, and I drew her to me. As I did so I felt a bandage upon her wrist.

"Are you hurt?" I asked. "Has he injured you by trying to cut you?"

"No, I did it myself. It was the only way I had — I used his knife on both arteries. But why torture me with it — "

I said nothing for a moment. The anguish she suffered was clear to me. She continued in a low, strained voice which wrenched me the more.

"He only insists that I belong to him, him alone — that is all — and he keeps me with him nearly all the time. I am his wife without any form of ceremony. Otherwise I'm well enough."

"Yes, it's either that, or worse," I spoke haltingly, yet with an effort at comforting her.

"You might have killed me," she sobbed, "you said you cared for me, and how did you show it — by letting me live like this?"

"It isn't easy to kill the woman you love."

"And, oh, I can't go over the side. I can't go down into that black void beneath. It seems so horrible to think of it, the endless blackness, the vastness of it, the loneliness of this great ocean. No, I must go on, I must live. I could have killed myself with the knife, but he found me and tied up the cuts — No, it's no use — let me go —"

"I'll let you go," I said, "but you needn't hurry away. There's no one coming below for some time and you might as well talk with me while we have the opportunity. I intend to get you out of the ship in a short time."

She listened and grasped the edge of the bulkhead.

"How can you? Can you get me into

a small boat? They would certainly get us before we could row away."

"I haven't decided upon the manner yet," I said, "but the time will be here shortly, and you must help me. There are many ways of getting clear when we get close to the beach."

"But you are not to get ashore. You are to die with the rest. I heard him tell Johnson so the other night after the poisoning among the men. They are going to get rid of nearly everybody by leaving them upon the ship when she is set on fire. I'm sorry for you, as sorry as I can feel with my own trouble upon me, and I'm glad to be able to tell you, Mr. Gore."

"You are telling me what I long suspected," I answered, "but Benson is not a great sailor. He knows very little indeed of the ways of ships, although he seems to be informed very well upon matters of rascality. I think he'll make a little mistake before he finishes. I suppose you are to go with him?"

"Yes, he will take me along until he tires

of me, I suppose. Then I'll find the same fate as the rest."

"Has he told anything of his future plans?" I asked.

"Only that when you get them within thirty or forty miles of the coast, they will take to the small boats. They will get all the boats overboard and alongside, with what plunder they can carry. Then the half-dozen or more who are to get away will get into the small boats and get clear of the ship while Benson sets her on fire. He is to jump overboard and be picked up at once, and then they will row off so the rest can't get to them."

"It's an excellent scheme, and does its developer great credit," I said; "but how about the arms? Won't the convicts fire on the boats when they find they are left aboard a burning ship?"

"I really don't know about those details," said Miss Waters. "I'm only telling what I overheard. If you think you can do something to stop them, I'll do anything to help you. Don't spare me in any way, and don't

mind what risk I have to take. Nothing could be any worse for me."

"It's a pretty bad business," I agreed. "Brown is the only man left aboard I can trust to help us if anything turns up. Has Benson told you anything about himself?"

"Only that he has no money to get away with, nothing to pay his expenses to some foreign country, where he hopes to live quietly until the affair is forgotten. He is going to take the first vessel we meet to loot her and get what he may."

"I see," I said; "perhaps he will have a chance very soon. We are in the lanes of ocean travel, and it's likely we'll overhaul a vessel before many days pass. Maybe we will have a chance. I'm to do my share, I suppose he told you?"

"If I thought you would, I would not be talking to you. You may be afraid to die, as I am, but I don't think you'll turn pirate."

Afraid to die? The sound of the words rang clear. Was I afraid to die? Good God! I who had faced some pretty hard hap-

penings. I certainly didn't want to die, but I had never thought of it in the way she put it. I didn't rightly know whether I was afraid to die or not. It was so different for a man. I could go into a fight with a joyful heart, without a thought of dying; the possibility of death never occupied space in my thoughts. But to sit down in cold blood and kill myself to avoid some wrong thrust upon me by some one else? That was a different matter. I thought of O'Toole. He certainly was not afraid of anything in any form.

"No, I don't know whether I'm afraid or not," I said, slowly. "Certainly I don't blame you for hesitating. You tried once when your courage was high, and now you admit you are afraid. I know I'm no braver than you."

"You are good and kind, anyhow," she answered. "I feel that you are sorry for me, that you will be my friend —"

"I shall certainly be your friend. I am your devoted friend, if you will have me for one," I said, "and as for yourself, you

have done the only thing you could do. As you say, you have not been schooled in the murder line."

She held out her hand and I took it, holding it for some moments.

"Whatever has happened to you will make no difference in my feelings," I said. "We must forget the past and deal with the present. You have done as much as any woman could, and that is all you could do. Stand by while I cast about for some means to get rid of the villains."

"No, no — you must forget me — only as a friend," she panted, trying hard to hold back the sobs. "I must live my life alone — and I must go now before he suspects me. If he knew I talked with you, he would kill you."

I drew her to me and kissed her.

The next moment she had disappeared, going through the cabin and into the stateroom of the villain who even now stood on deck just overhead. I was tempted again to go on deck and stand near him, close to the rail. In the darkness a sudden rush and

thrust from my knife, and no one might see the outcome. But, no, it would only make matters worse. The daylight would show the leader missing, and I could not hold the gang in check. I finally made my way to my room and turned in.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE morning dawned upon a wild sea. We were running off to the eastward so fast that it was necessary to stop the *Arrow*. The tremendous sea following us threatened several times to board, and about nine o'clock in the morning a big fellow fell in the waist. A dozen men were standing near the galley door when the water fell on deck, and a full hundred tons of it thundered upon the rascals. All forward disappeared in the white smother, and I had just a glimpse of a puff of white steam mingling with the storm of spray and splinters. The whole side of the galley had been swept away and the place gutted, the double planking being torn off as though a heavy shell had struck and exploded within.

Six men were carried overboard with the wash, and nothing could be done for them.

They passed out of sight before we recovered from the shock of the rushing water. Benson stood near me on the poop and smiled grimly.

"She won't stand many like that, will she?" he asked.

"One or two more will finish her," I assented. "We will have to stop her."

By desperate endeavour I managed to get some men to the braces, and after half an hour's hard work hove the *Arrow* to in as mighty a sea as ever ran in the South Atlantic. She would drop her long jib-boom down the side of a hill of water until it dipped, while looking over the stern we could still see a long way up the slanting sea. It was a grand but disagreeable sight, for we were ill manned for heavy weather, and I had no officers except Brown to help or relieve me. But she rode it down without further mishap, plunging for two days before the gale subsided and allowed us to get way upon her again. Then the weather moderated and we stood along upon our course to the southwest. The stove was

rigged up in the galley, and the hungry men, now desperate with the hardship, grumbled and growled and showed a temper which boded no good.

We had made nothing toward our destination for some days, and when this fact became known, I was treated to growls and surly looks from all hands.

On the sixteenth day of our run we were about three hundred miles to the eastward of the River Plate and had crossed the thirty-fifth parallel. One or two sails had been sighted; but we had never raised the craft above the horizon's rim, and the men had become hopeful in their security. But, with a gang of cutthroats, an easy, quiet life soon palls. After the danger of hanging disappears for a time, they soon become discontented for lack of excitement. They long for some new danger to interest them. The past is not pleasant to dwell upon and the present is dull.

On this sixteenth day the men were grouped about the main-deck in the afternoon, as had been their custom from the

start. Some were playing cards in the lee of the deck-house, while others threw dice or lounged and smoked in the gangways. Benson was below, but his trusty man, Johnson, was on the poop. I had occasion to send a man aloft to overhaul a leech-line, and the man who went up was a sharp-eyed young villain who had been to sea before and knew what was needed.

He had hardly reached the crosstrees when he hailed the deck:

"Sail on port bow!" he bawled, and pointed in the direction the vessel bore, which was just over the port cat-head. My heart gave a jump, but I tried to appear careless. I climbed up a few ratlines in the mizzen and looked forward. In a moment I saw a tiny white speck reflecting the slanting light of the sun. Then I looked down on deck and caught the look in Brown's eyes. He was ready for action.

Our vessel had been fitted out for a long voyage, the run to China often taking five months; but the excesses of the convicts had quickly finished off the kegs of spirits and

the bottled liquors for the after-cabin mess. The three men who acted as cooks were kept busy all the time serving out the plundered victuals meant for the after-guard, so that after the first week Benson was forced to cut them down to ship's rations. This had caused a mutiny, and it was only put down after a few men were killed and some injured. The effects of the disturbance were still visible and there was a good deal of loud grumbling done forward at meal-time.

Johnson gazed at the strange sail a few moments, and then told the man at the wheel to luff all he could and bade me attend to the bracing of the yards. I saw what he meant to do, and never did I jam a ship's yards on to her backstays as I did them.

I believe the villain intended to commit piracy from the first; but, aside from this, he had such an overpowering taste for liquor that he was willing to run any risk in order to procure some, either by trade or otherwise, without waiting for Benson.

The wind held steady and we went through the smooth sea at the rate of eight

or nine knots. The stranger rose rapidly on our weather bow, and it was evident that we were overhauling him fast enough.

At eight bells his courses were rising above the water, and my heart was pounding away under my ribs like a sledge. The men aboard us were about as poor sailors as, inversely, they were a fine set of rascals. Otherwise, they would have been suspicious, on seeing the depth of the stranger's topsails, and stood away to leeward with all possible speed.

When I had had a good look at the canvas ahead, I could hardly keep from smiling, and I feared I might do something to show my thoughts. I knew no merchant vessel afloat hoisted a full topsail fore and aft.

"What is he?" asked Johnson, coming close to me when I came on the poop.

"I can't tell at this distance," I answered, "but he looks to be a West Coast trader. Most likely he is one with a mixed cargo."

"There'll not be many men on him, then?"

"No," I answered, carelessly, well know-

ing what the scoundrel was thinking of. "Probably a dozen or fifteen at the most."

Benson had now come on deck, and he, together with Johnson and the few leading men, held a conference as to what they should do about the strange ship ahead. It didn't take long for them to decide after I gave them to understand the number of men they would probably find in the crew.

"There'll be no trouble about overhauling him before dark?" asked Benson.

"None in the world," I answered; "we can go ten fathoms to his one any time."

"Then hoist the Roger and let him know his time has come," said the swaggering villain.

Some of the more reckless spirits among the men had made a black flag and had stitched the canvas figures of a skull and cross-bones across its centre. They had never used it, and had made it more out of a spirit of bravado, while trying to kill time, than anything else. In a few moments it flew free and straight from the peak of the monkey-gaff.

The men were almost wild when they found it was decided to take the strange ship. Benson stood on the break of the poop and gave orders for getting things in readiness forward. Then it was as though a pack of wolves had broken loose on the main-deck.

Weapons were gotten out and cleaned. Cutlasses from the *Countess of Warwick* and sheath-knives from the slop-chest were carefully sharpened. Before the sun had sunk near the horizon, the black hull of the stranger rose above the sea, and the villains were ready to take him.

He was about three miles ahead now and drawing a little to leeward, so there was no trouble about him seeing our flag if he chose to look. I felt that he would be interested in its peculiar colour.

I passed Brown and made a sign for him to be ready. I fixed my knife where it would be handy.

Every moment was precious now. If the stranger would only see that flag before the convicts could tell of their mistake and

crowd on canvas and get the weather-gage, all would be well.

I watched him and saw the slanting rays of the sun shining on carefully scraped spars and snowy canvas, but no funnel showed above his deck and no ports showed in the long, smooth stretch of his shining black sides.

Suddenly something fluttered in the wind. I looked harder, for we were so close now that the British ensign could be seen distinctly as it stood out straight in the breeze.

Yes, I was not mistaken. Surely he was springing his luff and the canvas was slatting. Then I saw something that made my heart jump.

Up he came to the wind, and as he did so I saw a line of even breaks in the smooth black hull as he dropped his ports outboard. Then a puff of white smoke spurted from his side, and by the time the report of the gun reached our ears the convicts saw an English gunboat awaiting the explanation of the flying of that black flag.

CHAPTER XXII.

IT would be hard to describe the disorder and terror aboard the *Arrow* when the convicts realized their mistake.

Benson roared and raved like a madman, and I expected him to vent his anger upon Brown and myself at any moment for having deceived him. But he evidently believed that I was as much astonished as himself at the identity of the stranger. Not being a sailor-man, he did not understand the language of spars and canvas, and had no reason to think that my eyes were any better than his own.

At all events, even if he did intend to settle with me afterward, he now saw that his own life and the lives of his men depended on my being able to run the clipper clear of the English guns.

The Black Roger was pulled down

quicker than it takes to tell of it, and the American ensign run up in its place. But it was now too late to correct the error.

The stranger luffed sharply, and soon her main and mizzen yards swung quickly and evenly with the man-o'-war's precision. Then, letting go his bow-line, he came about and stood across our hawse; at the same time clapping on and sheeting home every rag possible below and aloft.

We were a little to windward of his course now, but he was well ahead. I saw that when he tacked ship it would only be a question of minutes before we were right under his guns, unless we wore ship instantly and ran for it. Even then he would probably be close enough to knock the spars out of us before we could get out of range.

He was evidently determined to find out the meaning of that joke about the flying of a black flag on the high seas.

"Shall we turn and run, or try and pass him to the windward?" I asked Benson, hurriedly, intimating that the former was

what I should choose, for I knew he would choose the opposite.

"Head your course, d——n you! If you fail to clear him, you are a dead man," he roared.

The villain didn't notice the smile I felt on my lips when he said this, or he would probably have finished with me then and there. He must have been much upset to have talked so wild, for he was usually cool enough.

"Get the men below in the fore-hold," he bawled to his man, Johnson, and that fellow bundled them down the fore-hatch like sheep, leaving only about a dozen to lounge about the deck as if they were sailors.

By the time this was accomplished we had closed the gap between the vessels to less than half a mile. The Englishman was on the starboard tack and crossing our course with everything drawing. He was heeling over and driving through a perfect smother of foam, and I could see the men running about the decks as they went to stations for

stays. He had gotten the weather-gage of us without difficulty.

In a few moments he luffed again on our weather-bow about a quarter of a mile distant. Then, without waiting to use signals, he fired a shot across our course just under our jib-boom end.

"He wants us to heave to," I said to Benson, for it was evident that the gunboat was not going to be overnice about signalling to men who joked with their colours. Benson ordered me to dip the stars and stripes, but hold steadily on our course. As we came abreast, the stranger came about and lay right on our weather beam with his main-yards aback. I could see that he intended to board us. A second puff flew from an after gun, and with the report a shot tore a great hole through our foresail and whistled away to starboard, but Benson still held on.

I saw great beads of perspiration roll down Brown's face as he stood watching us driving through the gunboat's lee. It was a trying moment. If the Englishman fired

a broadside into an American ship flying the ensign, it would be no joke for him if all was as it should be on board of her. On the other hand, there was much to justify him in overhauling a ship that had altered her course and set a black flag on sighting him, even if her name was on his register. It seemed an age to me as I stood there, hoping against hope, and I was thinking quickly and coolly of some way to check the ship should she drive past. I knew that if we once went through the Englishman's lee he would let us pass, so I made ready for the end.

It was not long coming.

We were now but fifty fathoms from the stranger's broadside, and I could see the men at the guns. I thought to hail him, but I saw that at the first word I would be knocked on the head.

Suddenly a man appeared on the gunboat's rail with a speaking-trumpet.

"What ship is that?" he bawled, though he might have read the name easily enough,

as it was painted on either quarter in letters a foot deep.

"American ship *Arrow,* Captain Crojack!" roared Benson in return, as he sprang on to the rail at the mizzen.

"Heave to and I'll send a boat," came the hail.

"I will not," roared Benson.

"I will fire on you if you don't," replied the stranger.

"I dare you," roared Benson, in his most menacing tone. There was never anything like it. That man's coolness and nerve would have made him an admiral had he not been a villain. He had a truculent way of talking that made people think twice before acting against him.

The Englishman hesitated at his audacity, and the ship, driving along with every rag a rap-full, went through the gunboat's lee. I then saw that we would be allowed to pass free, and I knew that the time for action had come. As Benson turned to jump down from the poop-rail on to the deck I was in front of him, and he saw the look in my

"I FORCED HIM BACKWARDS TO THE POOP-RAIL."

eye that told him plainly what I meant to do. Quick as lightning he drew his revolver and fired slap into me and then sprang to the deck. I felt the numbing stroke of the lead, but felt no pain, and the next instant we had closed.

I seized his weapon by the barrel as he fired again, and, although the bullet cut my wrist, it did not loosen or weaken my hold. Then I drove my knife into him with such force that the blade broke close off at the haft.

Dropping the useless hilt, I gripped him suddenly with both arms about his body, holding his arms to his sides. Then, exerting all my strength, I forced him backwards to the poop-rail. He brought up against it for an instant and wrenched his pistol hand free. Then I hurled him over the side. He clutched frantically at me, but I tore his grip loose, and he fell with a splash into the sea.

Glancing forward, I saw Johnson and a couple of men coming aft at full speed to their leader's help. Then I saw Brown

spring suddenly from behind the mizzen, knock the foremost ruffian headlong into the lee scuppers by a blow from an iron belaying-pin, and close with the rest.

Without stopping an instant to see the outcome of the affair, I dashed for the wheel.

The man there had seen the struggle on the poop, and he met me with drawn knife. But I struck him fairly with my right fist upon the point of the jaw, and he dropped like a log of wood.

Grabbing the spokes, I whirled the wheel over, and then plunged down the companionway into the after cabin. I heard a rush of feet on the deck overhead and the sharp cries of Brown, mingled with the hoarse oaths of frantic men. Then I drove full speed against the door of Crojack's stateroom and crashed into the space within.

That poor, dear girl was — but no matter, there are some parts of every affair that are nobody's business. In a second I had her in my arms and was leaping up that companionway, while the cries and oaths of the scuffle drew farther aft.

As I cleared the hatchway I saw the quarter-deck free ahead of me, and, giving a yell to Brown to follow, I plunged headlong over the taffrail into the sea. When I reached the surface with the girl in my arms, I turned to look back. I saw Brown hurl his belaying-pin into the crowd that had followed him aft, and as they chased him to the side he leaped over the rail on to the deck-strake. Then, running rapidly along the narrow projection on the vessel's side, he threw up his hands and took a flying dive astern. When he came to the surface he was over one hundred feet from his pursuers, and the ship was still forging ahead from her headway, although her canvas was all back and everything in a mess aloft.

With a few strokes Brown reached me, and together we held the girl afloat and struck out for the English ship.

Those on board the gunboat had seen something of the fracas, and, as soon as they saw the *Arrow* luff, they started to get out their boats as fast as willing hands could hoist them.

I swam easily, but I soon found that I was getting very faint, and that my breath seemed to burn like a flame in my throat and chest. I tried to tell Brown that I was going, but I could not utter a word. I remember seeing a boat approaching swiftly, and I remember noticing the even sweep of the oars until they appeared to row over my head and thunder past my ears. The noise was deafening, and my brain felt as if it were splitting with the roar. I put my hand to my head, felt something near it—awoke and found myself lying in a bunk on board of a strange ship. Then a soft hand brushed soothingly over my temples as gently as the breath of the trade-wind. A sweet voice whispered in my ear to lie quiet, and it made me feel so well that, in my upset state, I began to believe that I had at last cruised into the port of missing ships. I soon found, however, that I was not so badly wounded as I had reason to suppose, and that Brown was aboard there with me, his wounded leg doing well in spite of the twitching it received in that last rally.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DURING the short time I was in the water, a desperate fight was going on aboard the *Arrow*. Johnson, seeing how matters were turning out, rallied his men for a stand.

Five boats from the man-o'-war, filled with blue-jackets, armed and ready for the fight, drew alongside before the convicts could get the ship out of irons. She lay with her yards aback, and those who worked intelligently had their work undone by those who in their frantic haste worked like maniacs.

The boarders from the first small boat fastened to the mizzen channels, and, as they did so, Johnson dropped a mass of iron weighing two hundred pounds into the boat's bottom, tearing her open. She filled at once and sank before the men could climb aboard. Benson, though desperately wounded from my knife, managed to get hauled back

aboard by willing hands. He joined the crowd aft, and, holding to the taffrail for support, fired a double-barrelled gun with deadly effect into the approaching boats. A sailor fired at him with a rifle, and the bullet tore a hole through his chest, but he staggered back to his place at the rail and fought on. Two of the best, or rather worst, men in the gang used cutlasses with effect upon the men who crowded over the rail in the waist. An officer engaged one of these in single combat and for a short time there was a bit of sword-play. Then a sailor coming in from the starboard side smote the villain over the head with his cutlass butt and stretched him out for further orders.

Benson rallied the few followers aft, and together they forced a passage along that deck, with himself and Johnson leading. They joined the mass of men forward and crowded under the topgallant forecastle for a last stand. Within the slanting peak of the ship, and covered from attack above, they fought with a desperation that called forth all that was in the crew of the man-

of-war. An officer led a charge upon the huddled villains, and fired again and again into their leader, who received no less than five bullet-wounds, any one of which would have let the life out of an ordinary man. But Benson still fought on.

The convicts, being badly armed and improperly drilled, fought at a disadvantage. The ranking officer of the boat crews formed his men in line behind those fighting in the press and then called a retreat. The advanced men fell slowly back, and the convicts were loth to follow and leave their shelter. Then the sailors fired a volley point-blank into the crowd. This was more than the ordinary man could stand, and many wounded threw down their arms and came out to surrender. But not Benson.

The leader, seeing that there was no hope, hurled his empty gun at the men in uniform. Then he seized a cutlass, and walked staggering and swaying toward the line of levelled rifles. One or two men fired and a bullet hit him upon the head, passing through and flinging him half-way around.

He fell upon his hands and knees, but tried to raise himself, a ghastly sight. Three or four times he almost staggered to his feet, blinded, half-insensible, and dying, and then a man mercifully struck him upon the neck with his cutlass. His fight was over.

Johnson still resisted, but, under cover of the guns of the rest, three men dragged him forth and passed a lashing about him. Then the fight ended. In a short time the wounded were lowered into the boats and sent aboard the gunboat, while a few sailors turned to and cleared up the decks of the *Arrow*. Several men of the gunboat's crew were killed and several more badly wounded, and these latter were brought below to where Brown and I lay.

I now learned how the *Arrow* had been retaken after desperate resistance on the part of the convicts. The commander of the man-of-war, the *Petrel,* at first accused Brown and myself of being with the convicts in everything, and produced those papers we had written and signed to prove that they spoke the truth. But those papers did more

than anything we could do or say to clear us of the charge among our English friends, who were somewhat inclined at first to believe the statement of Johnson: that we only turned after being caught. Alice Waters's statement did much to help our cause.

The result was that Captain Spencer and his officers treated Brown and myself with every consideration and abstained from passing any private judgment against us before we could be tried. He told us how he had sighted the *Arrow* about the same time we had the *Petrel,* and of his amazement when he saw us haul our wind and run up the Black Roger to our peak. He thought, of course, that the skipper of our craft was drunk and that the affair was intended as a practical joke to the gunboat. After we had gone through his lee with the American ensign flying he was afraid that he had already gone too far into the matter, and regretted his last shot, which had torn our foresail. He would have let us go, for the *Arrow's* name was in his register, and he had not the faintest idea of the true state of

affairs on board. Having heard nothing of the *Countess of Warwick,* he had no reason to understand matters until after Brown and I had explained them. He put a prize crew on the clipper and sent her into the River Plate to be turned over to her agents at Buenos Ayres. When we reached England, Johnson made things look a little black for us at first. The villain had no scruples about perjuring himself to any extent, and he was backed by the rest of the ringleaders. But finally he and three of the latter were convicted of murder and piracy and hanged. The rest soon found themselves bound out on a voyage for the East. They never came back again.

Brown and I were cleared and sent back to the States, where we arrived safe enough, Brown's leg having entirely healed and my chest having become sound again, except for a slight shortness of breath for awhile when I exerted myself.

The *Petrel's* surgeon very gallantly informed me that I owed my complete recovery to a certain amount of very gentle nurs-

ing I had received, and not entirely to my robust constitution. As he had done little more than prescribe for me and oversee the dressing of my wound, it was evident that he did not wish to take this obligation to himself.

As to the nursing, I quite agreed with him, for the three weeks spent in a bunk on board the *Petrel* were among the pleasantest of my existence — up to that time.

When Miss Waters and I separated at Portsmouth, it was understood that I should meet her again in the States. When I was released, after the trial, I found that she had already sailed for New York.

When Brown and I arrived there and had given an account of this disastrous voyage to Mr. Ropesend, it was only natural that I should inquire for the girl who had passed through so much along with us.

To my great surprise, the old merchant announced that he had heard nothing of her whatever since she arrived in England.

As soon as possible I hastened to the office of the line of vessels on which I had heard

she had sailed. I found that the vessel on which she had left England had arrived safely ten days since. Her name was on the passenger list, showing that she had arrived in America, but all my efforts to trace her beyond the point of landing were useless. She had disappeared and had left no clue that might aid any one to follow her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN a man makes up his mind to do a certain thing, half the trouble and worry over the matter are things of the past. It makes no difference whether he is able to accomplish his purpose or not, the agonies of vacillation are gone. Over the future he has but little control. Over his present actions he has complete.

There is always a satisfied feeling within a man when he has thought over the matter and decided upon it absolutely in regard to what action he will take.

This was the feeling I possessed during the six weeks I was on the beach, waiting for the return of the *Arrow*. Mr. Ropesend still had faith in me and I was to take her out on her return from the River Plate.

The matter I had decided upon, however, was not exactly of a nautical nature,

and I went to every known friend and acquaintance of Captain Crojack's to get the information necessary to enable me to accomplish my purpose.

The apathy of the old sailor's friends shown in the search for his niece galled me. I sometimes felt almost glad that the old man was dead, so he could not see the indifference of people he once thought so much of.

Brown, who was on waiting orders like myself, stayed with me night and day. He did not go to the office, and avoided all other society as much as possible, except when helping me in my search.

In this manner we passed the time until the vessel arrived. Then we took up our quarters on board. I was placed in command, but it was with anything but a feeling of joy that I stepped again on that quarter-deck, so connected with sad memories.

Every plank seemed to recall those terrible days when I was, perforce, a pirate. However, as I said before, a sailor has but

little time to indulge in memories, so I shook myself together and started to get ready to put to sea.

Brown I had with me, but, although he had learned a good deal of nautical affairs, it was necessary that the ship should have two experienced men to relieve me. So I set out immediately to find them.

Our adventures had become thoroughly known to all long before this, and Brown and I both suffered from the charity peculiar to nearly all human beings. It was well known that we had joined the convicts, and the busy world had no time to waste discussing any excuse or necessity for our having done so. It was enough that we did it. The sensational newspapers offered a hundred reasons for our having done it, — all of them the worst possible ones, — and the people could take their choice or let them alone. They appeared to let them alone in order to form original ones nearly as bad, that were too unreasonable to bear discussion.

Boarding-house keepers eyed me curi-

ously when I entered their dens. Small knots of rough-looking men gathered and whispered whenever I entered any of the many dives where, I knew from experience, mates were in the habit of going to indulge their hard pleasures. Once or twice personal remarks were made in regard to myself in a tone loud enough for me to hear.

At one bar a big red-faced longshoreman made a jeering allusion to the part I played in joining the men who had taken my ship. It was a foul statement and I felt the blood rush into my face.

Then I turned on the ruffian like a flash.

It was a foolish thing to do, but the talk of so many had rankled in my heart until I lost control of my temper and I felt that I must bear it no longer.

I did not stop to argue the matter and set his reasons for my actions aright, but I lashed out and stretched him stiff on the floor. Then I looked the group over carefully to see if there were any matters of importance I might miss. But they were silent to a man. I turned and walked

slowly out of the room and down the street. I was not followed and I soon found myself on the *Arrow's* deck with little hope of securing my mates.

It was late in the evening when I returned, and Brown, who had been at work on the ship's stores, had gone up-town.

There was nothing for him to do on board after knocking off work, so I supposed he had strolled up the street. He had never left me before to go off in the evening alone, but, as we were to sail within the week, I supposed he had some private affairs to attend to.

I finished supper alone and then lit my pipe and strolled along the decks. The question of securing mates I would leave to the office and would trouble myself no more with the matter.

Men were lounging about on the slip between the vessels I passed, and gangs of longshoremen were leaving for the night.

I walked down a slip to where a Norwegian bark was being warped into her berth. She had just arrived and her black

sides were gray with crusted salt, telling of a long cruise and careless officers. The men on the t'gallant fo'castle had a line to the capstan and were walking it in with a will to the time of a chorus of hoarse voices.

Soon the vessel fell alongside the slip and I saw the voyage end. Then I turned and walked up the street, thinking of how a man can enjoy life after a six months' cruise on deep water.

I soon became aware of two men following close behind me, who were talking away at a great rate.

"Yes, but th' case av mine, it was different," said one. "They come a-crowdin' over th' side like a swarm av rats before I knowed what their lay was. B' th' soul of St. Patrick! But didn't I wade inter thim! Bang! Slam! I must have druv a whole ship's company inter th' main-deck like so many trunnels, an' as fast as I druv thim in their fri'nds would pull thim out, till nigh on to three hunderd av thim hit me a clip on me burgoo case all t'onct—"

"Scutt! ye bloody old red-headed liar; there wasn't half that many in the whole outfit."

"'Pon me whurd, for a fact, Garnett, 'tis outrajis th' way ye have av takin' an honest man up whin he's tellin' a straight yarn. I've shifted more'n one man's ballast for less."

"Now, by the Great Eternal, if I wasn't so old an' stove up I'd make ye prove that, ye braggart," growled the other; "but never mind, I'm too old to quarrel, as it affects my narvous system enormous. Stick to facts, man, always. I've no doubt that you were so scared that you thought they was a thousand. You always was sort o' timid at times. 'Twas too bad about Bull Gore, though, wasn't it? I'd never thought to see him come aback all standing like that. But it's generally the way with folks what always think themselves better'n anybody else."

"No more would I have thought it, Garnett. T' think av him turnin' pirit on one av owld Ropesend's own ships. 'Tis a quare world an' honest men ain't most plentiful

hereabouts. Had it been you, I wouldn't have been surprised, for ye're little better than an unhung pirit, anyways, by yer own account."

"S'help me, I'd never disgrace a decent rope with a figgerhead like yourn. What—"

I had turned and stood face to face with old Bill Garnett and O'Toole. The next instant the old mate had grabbed my hand with a hearty grip.

"So it's you yourself, Mr. Gore," he bawled, "just turned up while this red-headed heathen was saying pleasant things about you. Blast me, but I am glad to see you, though I wish you had stayed with that gang a little longer. I might 'a' joined somewhere, and with two such fellows as you and me afloat together, there's no telling what might have happened in the South Pacific afore the year was out."

"'Pon me whurd, Mr. Gore, what I said was but th' truth, an' it won't stand atween two old shipmates, even if they don't happen t' be agreeable on some principles. Here's me hand, sir. Ye saved th' last av th'

O'Tooles," and the honest fellow held out his great carroty fingers, and I grasped them.

"'Tis a fact, 'pon me whurd, ye saved me life, sure, by makin' thim cast me adrift, though I didn't thank ye much at th' time, seein' a cruise in an open boat ain't a pleasant trip for a man all alone in th' calms. Yes, sir, ye saved me, sure, an' I'm th' last av thim. There was Reddy, me brother, lost in Chaney with th' owld man, an' there was Mike, me own cousin, on th' West Coast, an' I'm th' only one left, an' ye did save me — "

"Worse luck," grunted Garnett; "'tis a pity you're alive to say it, for it was the worst of all his crimes. I could forgive him everything else, but saving you to come back here and talk people to death with your bragging yarns."

"Tell me," I said, "how the devil you fellows ever got clear of the scrape."

"That's jist about what we would like you to tell us about yourself," said Garnett, "and maybe you can explain to this low-minded Irishman the reason you were not hung. Come on with us, if you don't mind watch-

ing this beast get drunk. We're just ashore from that bark there, and we've got the night bearing dead ahead till sunrise. I'll not be responsible for the respectability of the places this red-headed man's steering for."

I thought for a moment. I knew well enough that I owed my berth as master of the *Arrow* solely to the fact that Brown happened to be on board during her last cruise. If I left the matter of hiring mates to the office and had any difficulty with them afterward, it was an even chance that the influence of Mr. Ropesend would cease, and in spite of his friendship I would be on the beach for good and all. While I suspected the influence Brown had with the head of the firm was due to more than friendship, especially after the old man's remark about my never having been married and having children of my own, yet I was by no means certain of it. Here were two mates I wished to have above all others, anyhow, for I knew them and they were my friends. I could count on Garnett, if he would remain sober enough

to talk to, and I made up my mind to take him.

O'Toole I was not so certain about, but I made up my mind to try him. So I went with him up the dirty street to Garnett's favourite haunts in the neighbourhood of the Battery.

As we walked along the old sailor told how he had been overpowered along with the rest of the crew and guard on the *Countess of Warwick,* and how the convicts had taken to the boats after setting fire to the ship and leaving the whole ship's company to burn.

One man had finally burned himself clear, and while badly injured had managed to clear one of his comrades. Then they were all cast loose and set to work to build a raft.

They left the burning ship while the villains were fighting us, and were not discovered by them. A vessel had picked them up the fifth day afterward, and a month later landed them at Cape Town. While waiting there a vessel came in, and off her walked O'Toole. He had been afloat twenty days in

the open boat, and was all but dead when rescued. His first desire appeared to be to give Garnett a thrashing for having been the indirect cause of his sufferings, as it was owing to Garnett's steering that caused the *Countess of Warwick* to remain in our vicinity for such a long time. Had she been a few miles farther off that night, the convicts would probably not have noticed us. In the end, however, the mates compromised matters by becoming friendly again and sailing together for the States.

When we turned into the street that led past the office, I was astonished to find the lower rooms of that building lit up with a bright light which shone through the closed shutters. It was long after office hours, so, fearing there might be a fire within the building, I stopped and looked about me for the watchman. He was not in sight.

Without waiting any longer I made O'Toole and Garnett raise me on their shoulders until I could peep through the shutters into the room.

The gas was burning brightly, and there

at a desk sat Mr. Anderson. He was talking, with flushed face and angry gestures, to Brown, who stood quietly before him.

I couldn't hear the words well enough to distinguish their meaning, but it was evident that something unusual was being discussed.

"What the devil makes you so long about it — is it a ghost?" asked Garnett, who was getting tired holding half my weight.

"No," I said, "but it might be one soon if it were you in there," and little did I think as I joked that my words were almost prophetic.

I came down and told them that Mr. Anderson was in there talking to a man. Nothing more was said about the matter, and we continued on our way.

The little scene I had just witnessed caused me to do some thinking, and before we reached "Old Ben's," I decided to see what was taking place in the shipping-office.

"You men meet me here in an hour. I have something important to tell you," I said, as we reached the tavern door.

"Jest one drink on me," said Garnett, "before ye go."

We had one round, and then I left them, both promising to be on hand at the time appointed.

CHAPTER XXV.

As I drew near the shipping-office, I saw the light was still burning bright, and the window-blinds, though drawn, allowed it to stream through the space between them and the sash. Few business houses in this section have lights burning at night. I stopped a moment to consider what to do. Of course it was none of my business what took place between Brown and Anderson, but, as the young man had served with me as an officer and had acquitted himself thoroughly, I felt some interest and I might confess also a bit of curiosity. I had heard enough to know that there was something irregular with the business of Brown going out with me on that fateful voyage. I believed him innocent of any wrong-doing, but, as it had been Mr. Ropesend himself who had sent him, I was not certain. A young man might do many

things which would get him into trouble and still not be a very bad sort of chap. I had committed several little acts in my day that I would not care to repeat, but I never held that I was a great villain because of them. Ignorance and temptation are factors which the tolerant and trained observer of events must take into consideration. I've always noticed that the man who is quick to condemn is quick to commit crime.

Crime is the practical application of selfishness and the unselfish man does not condemn his fellow. I was prepared to hear Brown own up to some foolish speculation which involved the firm's finances, and I went boldly to the side door, the door which opened into the room in which I had seen them talking but a short time before.

Knocking loudly, I listened for further developments. There were sounds of a scuffle, then panting and shuffling of feet, as when men are struggling in desperate encounter. A loud crash followed this, and then there was a cessation of noises, but the panting breaths of the men continued.

"It's Gore, let me in," I cried, pounding again upon the panels and putting the whole weight of my shoulder upon the door.

"I can't get up, he has me down," gasped Brown from somewhere within.

"What's the matter?" I bawled. "Open the door."

Anderson, probably seeing that I would force an entrance directly, went to the latch, and in a moment I entered the room. Brown was in the act of rising from the floor. He greeted me with a knowing look.

"Well, what's the trouble?" I asked.

Anderson gave a deprecatory gesture with both hands and sat down at the desk. He evidently had nothing to say. Brown hesitated while he regained his composure. Then he spoke.

"You know what I went to sea for," he began, "you know that I was accused of appropriating the firm's money—"

He stopped a moment, and I nodded.

"Yes," I said, "I had heard something to that effect."

"Well, here is the culprit," said he, and pointed to Anderson.

"I always thought as much," I said, with some feeling, and as I spoke the man at the table turned upon me.

"See here, Gore," said he, "you are not wanted in this affair, my father — Mr. Ropes— " Here he stopped a moment.

"He doesn't know, but as long as you have begun, you might as well tell him all," said Brown. "Mr. Ropesend is Mr. Anderson's father, and you will doubtless incur the wrath of the firm if you meddle with this, so you might just as well go."

"I'll go if you say so," I said, "but it looked as though murder was being done when I broke in," and for the life of me I could not help the following question, "And Miss Anderson is not your sister, then?"

"Thank God, no, she is not," put in Brown.

"Mr. Ropesend will not care to have any of his sailing-masters taking part in this affair," said Anderson, coldly. "What you

have heard you can keep to yourself. If you don't you will probably suffer the consequences. Now you can get out, for Mr. Brown and I will settle this matter before we leave here to-night."

"I fail to see how we can settle it without you making good and confessing everything," said Brown. "There is hardly room in the firm for both of us, and I'm tired of going to sea."

Anderson rose from his chair. He was cool and collected, but something in his manner made me think he was on the point of collapse.

"You had better go, Mr. Gore," said he, quietly. "There will be no more disturbance, I forgot myself just before you arrived, and I thank you for coming when you did. You can go without fear of any harm to Mr. Brown. Good-bye."

He held out his hand and I took it. His fingers were cold and, although he was a large and powerful fellow, he shook visibly when I let go. "Good night," I said, and turned to the door.

"Good night, Gore," said Brown. "I have your word not to talk about anything you have seen or heard."

"Yes," I answered, "good night." And I went forth.

CHAPTER XXVI.

I MET the two sailors at "Old Ben's" tavern. They had been waiting, taking a nip or two at a table until I came.

"'Tis good liquor," said Garnett, as he put down his glass; "'tis a most holy an' pious drink, makin' all manner of holy an' pious thoughts come into my old head. 'Tis good liquor an' well fitted for a man along in years, like myself, who has filled his skin with all manner of truck and ruined his digestion. You say you'll have another?"

The glasses were refilled.

"Now, 'pon me whurd, fer a fact, Mr. Gore, 'tis fer gettin' outrajis drunk that baldheaded infidel is after; jist obsarve him."

Garnett had removed his cap and was hard at work mopping the dent in the top

of his shining, bald cranium, where he had been "stove down" by a handspike in the hands of a sailor on one of his early voyages. Then he pulled out his little nickel-plated vial and sniffed at it violently.

"I don't mind his personalities," he remarked, "for I call to mind the time well enough when I could make him or any of his kin toe a seam. We had a little fracas onct, when I was mate with old man Anderson, and he remembers well enough what I used to be when it came to finding out who was who on a vessel's main-deck."

"What Anderson was that?" I asked. "You mean the one who used to be in with Mr. Ropesend?"

"Sure, no other, though I supposed he was dead long afore this. He was an out an' outer when he was on deep water, an' a little more so when he was on the beach. I misremember something about a shindy he got into on the West Coast, when he was skipper of the *Ivanhoe*. He did the right thing, though, for he took the boy along with him as soon as he growed big enough

an' carried him around the Cape. Afterward he made a present of him to old man Brown's wife, who had no young uns of her own, an' who was always making pets of dogs and parrots aboard and driving the old man half crazy. Old man Brown and your father, old man Gore, were great chums, and so he was with old Mr. Ropesend —"

"Ye can't believe nothin' a garrulous owld man like him says," interrupted O'Toole. "Let's have another round av th' craythur an' discuss somethin' worth hearin', sich as wimmin, for instance. He's an ondacent owld scandal. A rale owld scandal."

"Pay no attention to him," said Garnett, and I could tell by the slight thickness of his speech that the old mate was getting his head sheets in the wind. "I was about to tell of one of old Brown's monkeys, when he stuck his head into the muzzle of the foghorn one day, an' this boy turned her loose, full blast. Gord! I believe the critter ain't through climbin' yet — up an' down — miz-

zen r'yal truck — then to the mainmast head — then for'ards an' up agin — "

"Hold on a minute," I said, "before we have any more liquor; I want to ask both of you if you will sail with me on the *Arrow* the day after to-morrow?"

"What! sail away again afore a man has a chanct to get the sea roll out of his legs an' some good liquor into them?" roared Garnett. "I reckon not. What's liquor made for, anyway? D'ye expect we'd think o' sech a thing?"

"Certainly; the pay is good, and we are bound for China."

Neither answered for several moments; but Garnett gave me a sidelong glance from the corner of his eye and then looked at O'Toole.

Finally he said:

"I might go as mate, but nothin' would tempt me to sail under a fellow like that." And he pointed at O'Toole.

O'Toole seemed to be hunting for something in the bottom of his glass, and he said nothing.

"Well," I observed, somewhat dryly, "come take a turn through the park and let's discuss the matter before it's too late. There's plenty of time to get a brace on afterward. I must have a couple of men that I can rely on." And, making this last appeal to their vanity, I arose from the table and they followed me.

After settling the score, we walked up the street, which was still filled with people, and were just about to enter the park when a crowd forming on the sidewalk on the block beyond attracted our attention.

"'Tis a bit av a fracas, maybe," said O'Toole. "Let's have a look at it and take a hand — if necessary."

We made our way quickly along the pavement and forced ourselves through the crowd of gaping people.

A man was lying in the centre of the crowd, and his head was pillowed in a woman's lap. His pale face was upturned, and the woman wiped away the blood that flowed from a gash in his forehead upon her clean white handkerchief.

"Stand back, please, and give him air," she cried, and her voice made me jump and start forward. Every nerve in me seemed to throb at the sound. But the people only crowded closer. I could not see the woman's face, for her back was turned toward me, but I recognized her voice quick enough. Taking a brace against the huge form of O'Toole, I shoved with all my strength against the crowd, and together we managed to force a gap of a few paces in extent about the fallen man. The next instant an ambulance came driving up at full speed. Several officers leaped out and tore their way through the jam of curious people to the injured man's side. They raised him quickly, bore him to the wagon, and drove rapidly away.

"Knocked down and run over," some one said in a low tone, as I turned to where the woman now stood with a policeman beside her.

"Who was it?" the officer asked her.

"I don't know."

"What is your name?"

"I have no name," she answered, quietly, and was gone in the crowd before the policeman thought to detain her.

In an instant I was after her and caught her.

"Alice — Miss Waters!" I cried, and I seized her arm.

She turned at the sound of my voice as if shot.

"Let me go! Oh, please let me go, Mr. Gore," she pleaded, and I saw her face flush and her eyes fill up.

"Not unless you'll come with me to Mr. Ropesend's house — or tell where you live," I answered, but, at the same time, I did let go her arm.

"Oh, I can't. I can't do it, I tell you, so please go away. You have no right to stop me. Oh, please go away." And she broke into sobbing and crying like a child.

That was enough. I passed my arm through hers and led her out of the crowd and up the street.

"I shall see you home," said I, "and I

will not leave you until you promise to let me see you in the morning."

She went along quietly enough at first, and then suddenly burst out afresh into such a violent fit of crying that I was frightened.

"Let me go. Let me go, please," she sobbed, and I was so upset at the earnest tone of her voice that I almost hesitated and started to turn around.

Then I saw a sturdy, bow-legged form dragging a great, tall giant along the pavement close behind me.

"What can any one want with me?" the poor girl sobbed in such a bitter tone that it cut me like a knife. Then she grew more quiet, though the tears still ran down her cheeks. I took the arm I had dropped and went on.

What I said is no one's business. But before we reached the place where she was staying she had promised to do as I had asked her.

We walked slower as we drew near the

house where she was staying, and those ruffians behind us began to catch up.

"I niver thought it; 'pon my whurd, fer a fact, I didn't. But 'tis clear as a tropic night, with a moon, t' me now."

"You never think, anyways, you red-headed infernal —"

"'Pon me whurd, I forgive him, Garnett. I might av died for a principle, savin' yer ugly prisince, but by th' sowl av Saint Patrick I'd turn pirit this minute fer a leddy like that."

"The more fool, you, you —"

"Phwat's th' matter with ye? She's young and hasn't half th' divilments av a widder —"

"If you are going to sail with me get out and get as drunk as you please. If you are not aboard in the morning I go without you. Get out! Clear!"

There was something in my voice that made them look at me, and they both understood. The next minute they disappeared down a cross street.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A COUPLE of hours later I went down the street with feet that felt so light that they seemed to barely touch the ground.

I had had a long talk with Miss Waters and the poor woman with whom she had been staying, and the former had promised me something.

I was glad to get out of the squalid little tenement parlour, for a man who is used to the fresh air of the sea is always uncomfortable in a close little room. It's different from a fo'castle. I remember that I stopped once and started to dance a hornpipe on a dark corner nearly opposite the shipping-office. Then, fearing that some one would see me and think me drunk, which I was not, I ceased and looked quickly up and down the street.

The light in the office was still burning

as brightly as when I passed there a few hours earlier.

I went along the pavement on the opposite side of the street until I stood directly in front of the building. Suddenly the door opened and a moment afterward the light went out. Then a figure came slowly down the front steps and looked hard at me.

It was Brown, but his face was so distorted with some mental disturbance that I barely recognized him.

He appeared to be suffering keenly, for his cheeks were pale and drawn, and the lines about his mouth showed plainly in the light of the street-lamp.

I had never seen him look so upset, even during the time he was serving with Benson, and I hesitated about joining him.

He, however, did not give me a chance, for he did not even speak to me, but walked rapidly away and disappeared down the now deserted street.

I was too busy with my own thoughts to pay any more attention to the matter for the present, and I went on board the *Arrow*

and turned in, thinking that he would be there when I awoke in the morning.

When I turned out he was not there, and a short time afterward I heard the news that Mr. Anderson was dead.

He had been found sitting at his desk in the office. The gas was turned on in the room and the doors and windows closed. When the janitor opened the place for business in the morning, he had been almost suffocated. As soon as he recovered sufficiently he called for help, and he and several others entered the room and dragged the unfortunate young man into the hall. They found that he had been dead for several hours.

That was all. I've never heard anything more definite about the matter. But I was satisfied that my friend Brown was cleared.

Alice Waters and myself were married the next day.

As luck was with us, that very day the old clipper *Morning Light* came in, and, after a good deal of fuss and bother, I made a deal to get transferred to her.

Williams, her skipper, was a friend of

mine, and he backed me in the effort to exchange to the point of resigning altogether. He owned enough shares in the vessel to finally settle the matter, and this gave me a couple of weeks longer on the beach and Williams a chance to go to China, which was what he wanted.

Brown suddenly changed his mind about sailing with us, and had his things put ashore. He never came near the *Morning Light* until just as the tug took our towline. Then we suddenly found that Garnett — as usual when about to start off soundings — had disappeared during the bustle of clearing to take a nip at a neighbouring gin-mill. O'Toole, in a fighting temper, started after him.

The big Irishman soon had him half-way down the dock before the old mate realized his undignified position. Then he lashed out and struck O'Toole a powerful blow, and the prospect became interesting. A crowd gathered, and this attracted the attention of a policeman, who forced his way to where the mates were struggling. With the help of a few bystanders he parted them, and then,

seizing Garnett by the coat, he started to drag him off to the lockup, when Brown appeared on the scene, pointing to me and saying something to the officer which checked him long enough for me to make a landing on the dock.

"Who is he?" asked the policeman, as I made my way toward them.

"Windjammer from the shade o' night, that's what I am," panted the old mate, thickly.

"I mean his business?" snapped the officer.

"Tending to other people's, you brass-bound soger," and with that Garnett made a rush that came near landing both overboard. But O'Toole and I seized him and hustled him aboard ship, while Brown explained matters and pacified the officer. He soon accomplished this, and then he came on board and shook hands with the mates, my wife, and myself while the lines were being cast off. The tug blew her whistle and the ship began to drift away from the dock, holding only by the taut headline to spring her clear.

Brown wished us all manner of good luck

and sprang ashore. He stood a moment on the edge of the wharf, waved a farewell salute, and then disappeared in the crowd looking on. Garnett stood staring after him as if he had seen a ghost. Then he turned suddenly and bawled out:

"All clear forward! Captain Anderson." And then he took out his little nickel-plated vial and sniffed hard at it for several moments.

"'Tis th' liquor in th' baste yit," grinned O'Toole, who stood close to me. "He knows old Ropesend's son well enough, an' a good bye he is. Shall we go ahead, sir?"

"Yes, let her go!" I bawled, and we were gone.

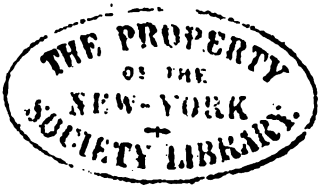
That is all. The voyage was the pleasantest that I can remember, and our run to 'Frisco was made in 120 days.

When we returned, homeward bound, both Mr. Ropesend and Brown were quietly at work in the office, and each of them gave me a hearty welcome. Brown's wife invited mine to stay with her while the ship was discharging, and they became fast friends.

I often think of those early friendships we both cultivated, and as to those women, they were always together.

Alice often tries to make me give up some of my "I's" since then, saying that there wouldn't be enough left to go around among the single mates if I didn't. But I'm a man of habit, so, if there seems to be too many of them in my yarns, I can't help it.

THE END.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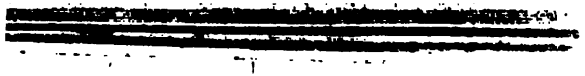

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